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SO KAI AND BEDIVERE CAME TO GLOUCESTER CASTLE.

TALES

FROM THE

MABINOGION

EDITED BY

META E. WILLIAMS

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PREFACE

IS it not true, dear little brothers and sisters, that you love people who have written beautiful stories for you? Do you not feel as if Hans Andersen and Mrs Ewing, Canon Kingsley and Professor Church, were very dear friends of yours? But you have one good friend, of whom you probably know nothing. You can find her name, Lady Charlotte Guest, on the back of a big book called the *Mabinogion*, which is full of the most beautiful fairy tales. Four of these stories, we are

told, once formed part of the training of young bards; hence the name, which means something like 'tales for prentice bards to tell.' They are contained in a manuscript called the 'Red Book of Hergest,' which is kept in the library of Jesus College, Oxford. It was written, in Welsh, during the fourteenth century, but the stories are so ancient that no one knows when they first began to be told in Britain. Your friend translated them into English more than fifty years ago. That was no easy task for her; for the old Welsh is very difficult, and the stories allude to many things forgotten now. Yet she did not grow weary; and by her learning and labours she has opened the door for us into a whole new region of pleasure —a land of boundless plains and vast castles, of doughty knights and swarthy

giants, of old-world customs and charms and spells.

Learned men can tell you how these stories are linked to those of other lands; but, for the present, it is enough for you to know that they belong largely to your own country, and very proud of them you should be. You will be proud of them some day, when you are older and can read the *Mabinogion* for yourselves; but meantime this story may make you wish to read the rest. Things you could not understand have been made clear as far as possible; and the hard Welsh names have been translated, or spelt differently, or have had others substituted for them; in the hope that you may learn to appreciate these grand old stories, and to think lovingly and gratefully of Lady Charlotte Guest, to whom you owe so many thanks.

It is with many apologies to all who are versed in the Arthurian legends that I venture to produce this little attempt to make one of the stories of the *Mabinogion* more accessible to English-speaking children. My object is merely to do away with the obvious difficulties they present to young readers, especially to those who do not understand Welsh. I can offer no other defence for my treatment of the Welsh names or of the stories themselves.

Very gratefully do I acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Kuno Meyer, who has most kindly allowed me to appeal to his profound knowledge of the Celtic tongues in all my difficulties.

META E. WILLIAMS.

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THORNOGRE THISTLEHAIR,
CHIEF OF THE GIANTS

KILHUGH AND OLWEN

HOW PRINCE KILHUGH CAME BY HIS NAME

IN the beginning of Arthur's time and the days of the Table Round, Prince Kilith set out to seek his bride. And he won for his bride Golethid, a sister of the Fair Ygerne. She was more beautiful than daylight, and sweeter than a gladsome morn in May. Her hair was brighter than sunshine, and her smile more radiant than the early beams that mount above the hills at dawn. Therefore was she called Golethid, Bright-as-Day.

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There was no braver prince in all the world than Kilith, and no gentler lady than his Queen; yet their people were but ill at ease. Who should guide their councils and lead them out to war they knew not, if Prince Kilith went untimely to his grave. Therefore prayer was made throughout that land, and through the prayers of the people an heir to the throne was granted them.

The child was not called after kinsman or friend; but waited, like a British babe, till fate or fame should name him.

He was given to a country woman to nurse; and thus it came about that, while he was still but a babe, he was lost on the hills one day. His foster-mother sought for him under heath and bush and briar; but she could find him nowhere. For a swineherd, passing by that way, had spied a little child lying asleep in a swine's burrow. When he lifted him in his arms he

knew the princely boy, and took him home to his father's hall.

Thenceforth his name was Kilhugh, the prince of the swine's burrow.

But what of that? The lad was of gentle lineage and cousin to Arthur himself. Was not his mother own sister to the mother of the king?

HOW KILHUGH'S MOTHER DIED

GOLETHID the Bright fell sick, and soon she knew that she must die. She called Prince Kilith to her side and said, 'I feel that of this sickness I shall die, but do not grieve too much for me. Good wives are gifts from God, and He will give thee another wife to comfort thee when I am gone. But promise me, I pray thee, not to seek thy new bride till a briar with two blossoms grows upon my grave.'

'I promise,' said the King.

'Yet one thing more,' she said, 'do not deny me, 'tis my last request. Promise to have my grave tended, day by day and year by year, that nothing may grow upon it, neither grass nor weeds nor flowers.'

'Thou shalt have thy will, Lady,' said the King.

And the Day-bright Queen was dead.

As for Kilhugh, he was sent, like any other young prince, to be brought up in the household of the greatest baron in the land.

HOW PRINCE KILITH BROUGHT HOME HIS NEW BRIDE

DAY by day, for seven years, the King sent a weeding-woman every morning to tend the grave of the Queen. But in the seventh year he grew forgetful of his promise.

One day as he rode out a-hunting, he chanced to pass the royal burial-place; and lo, a briar with two blossoms grew upon her grave!

Then he knew the time was come for him to seek his new bride. He summoned his nobles to a great

council, and laid the matter before them.

'Tell me,' said he, 'if indeed ye know, where I may find a bride worthy to sit in Queen Golethid's seat.'

The barons held their peace: when should they see her like again?

At length one of them spoke out and said, 'Sir King, there is one lady, and one only, in the Island of the Mighty who is worthy of so high an honour. But she is a queen already: the wife of the Prince of the Hilly Country.'

The King and his barons considered this reply a long time. At last one chieftain answered for them all, 'If thou wilt be counselled by us, Sir King, thou wilt make war on the Prince and slay him.'

And as they determined, so they did. They carried off the lady and her daughter, leaving the Prince slain and his country wasted.

Thus Prince Kilith sought his new bride, and thus he brought her home.

HOW KILHUGH'S STEP-MOTHER LAID A DESTINY UPON HIM

THE new queen had heard a rumour that Prince Kilith had two sons. When she came to his Court and found never a young prince there, she could not rest till she knew what had become of them.

Down in the village dwelt an aged crone who could tell fortunes better than a witch. She was as crooked as a thorn stick, as cunning as a fox, and so old that she had not a tooth in her head.

The Queen was walking abroad one day, when she passed by the old hag's cottage. She turned aside and stepped within.

'Good-morrow, good dame,' said she. 'Prithee, tell me the thing that I want to know.'

'That I will, my Liege Lady, if I can,' said the old woman.

'Tell me, then, what has become of the sons of my husband, the King of this land, who brought me hither against my will.'

'Sons, didst thou say? The King's sons! He has no sons.'

'Alas!' cried the Queen, 'so they are dead.'

'Dost thou grieve for the King?' said the old crone. 'There is no need to grieve for him. Yet I have spoken but the truth. Sons, he has not; but a son, he has. He is being bred up in the castle of the first lord of this land. Yet have thou no fear for that. Not he, but a son of thine own

shall inherit this crown and kingdom.'

Home went the Queen in joyful mood; and to the King she said, 'Why hast thou kept it from me that thou hast a son?'

'Thou shalt see the lad ere nightfall,' quoth the King.

The messengers departed in hot haste to bring Prince Kilhugh to his father's Court. They were back again before sundown, and the Prince along with them.

The heart of the King swelled with pride as he looked upon his son. As for the Queen, he pleased her so well that she wished with all her heart he had been her own child. Then a thought came into her mind, and she said, 'Fair Prince, thou wilt wed some day; why not choose thy bride to-night? Yonder sits my daughter, the loveliest maiden in this Island. The bravest knights in Europe are singing lays in praise of her, and the noblest heroes

of Arthur's Hall come hither to seek her hand. She shall be thy betrothed.'

'Gentle dame,' said Kilhugh, 'I am not of an age to wed.'

'For that word, Prince Kilhugh,' she replied, 'I lay this destiny upon thee. Thou shalt never wed till thou hast won Olwen, the daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, for thy bride.'

HOW PRINCE KILHUGH OBEYED HIS FATHER

PRINCE Kilhugh blushed; and the love of the maiden filled his soul, though he had not heard her name before. His face flushed with happiness and his eyes shone with joy. 'What aileth thee, my son?' said his father; 'wherefore art thou so gay and glad?'

'Father,' said he, 'my stepmother has foretold that no one but Olwen, daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, shall be my wife.'

'There will be toil, I ween, and

trouble enough, before that saying comes to pass,' said Prince Kilith. 'But have no fear, my son. It will be easy for thee to win the maiden for thy bride. Thou art of Arthur's lineage, and his cousin. Who but he should cut thy hair and be to thee father and lord? Go then to him, and crave this of him as a boon.'

To Arthur's Court, then, Kilhugh resolved to go. Prince Kilith sent a band of fifty of his bravest knights with him, that he might present himself before the King in a manner befitting his rank, and worthy of a kinsman of Arthur.

HOW PRINCE KILHUGH RODE TO ARTHUR'S COURT

THE youth pricked forth upon a steed of dappled gray, four summers old, with shell-shaped hoofs and well-knit limbs. His saddle was of burnished gold, his bridle of shining golden chains. His saddle-cloth was of purple tissue, with four apples of gold, worth three hundred kine, at the four corners. The war-horn slung over his shoulder was of ivory; the sword that hung by his side had a golden hilt and a two-edged blade inlaid with a cross of gold 'of

THE BLADE OF GRASS BENT NOT BENEATH HIM
AS KILHUGH RODE TO ARTHUR'S COURT.

the hue of the lightning of heaven.' His shoes, from the knee to the tip of the toe, were embossed with gold worth three hundred kine; and his stirrups also were of precious gold. In his hand he held two spears, with shafts of silver and heads of tempered steel, so sharp that 'they were of an edge to wound the wind and cause blood to flow. Swifter were they than the fall of the dewdrop from the blade of reed-grass upon the earth, when the dew of June is at the heaviest.' Two white-breasted brindled greyhounds bounded before his charger. Broad collars, set with rubies, were on their necks; and to and fro they sprang like 'two sea-swallows sporting around him.' The blade of reed-grass bent not beneath him, so light was his courser's tread, as he journeyed towards the gate of Arthur's palace.

And, as he rode, he wondered to himself, 'Will there be a warder at the gate? Surely, before King Arthur's

hospitable door, there will be no porter; but a knight of courteous speech, ready to bid all comers welcome, and to instruct them in the manners of the Court.'

ARTHUR'S HALL

THE Wide White Hall of Arthur had been built by Rearfort the Architect. Eight-and-forty were the rafters of its roof. It would hold all Arthur's Companions, and his nobles; his warriors, his retainers, and his guests. While Kilhugh was riding thither, the tables were set for the evening meal, and the King with his paladins and his train of attendants took their places round the board. And the great gate of the outer court was locked.

Let no man say that Arthur dared

not dine with open doors, for fear his foes should fall upon him unawares. He was at peace with all the world. Should kings and nobles eat with unshut gates like peasant folk?

In Arthur's Hall there sat his three friends, Paris and Ban and Bors, the Three Kings of France. And the King of Armorica, the King of Ireland, and the King of the North. And Concobar, King of Ulster; and Nith, King of Faerie; and Kaw, King of Strathclyde, with his seventeen sons, who had been driven out of their dominions by the Saxons.

Leodogrance, Queen Gwinevere's father, sat there, and Perceval, with the Long Shaft; Geraint and his two brothers; Galahad, the Summer Falcon; Gwydion the Guide, the Man of Fantasy; and Manawithan, the son of King Lear. Of Arthur's kindred, there sat at the board, the Seven Men of Fort Dathal; the foundations of whose castle may be seen above Llanrwst in

Caernarvonshire to this day: and the King's half-brothers and his four uncles.

Arthur's Three Champions were there; and his Two Old Companions, his Two Henchmen, his Two Chief Huntsmen, and his Priest, and Gwenever, his Lieutenant in Devon and Cornwall: he was the ninth man who rallied the Battle of Camelot.

Next to him sat Swifthand, from beyond the raging sea; Fleetfoot, from the Hill of the Black Fernbrake in North Britain; and the Pict, from beyond the Headland of Ganion, the westernmost point of Caernarvonshire.

The King of the Lost Country was there, looking as sad as might be; for he was ever thinking of the night when the sea burst in upon his realm, and swallowed up castles and towns, forests and fields, before the dawn. He himself barely escaped with his life, and fled to Arthur's Court, where they called him the Old Traveller, because of his race from the incoming

tide. This ruin had befallen him through the slothfulness of his dyke-ward. 'Sluggard' shall he be called for evermore, who was drinking merrily with his comrades when he ought to have been guarding the sea-walls that kept the ocean out! After this calamity another trouble came upon the hapless King. No haft would remain on his great knife. Let the smith fasten one on never so deftly: it was off again before the sun went down. This omen perplexed him so that he fell ill with grieving, and pined away and died.

Osla with the Great Dagger sat there too. Short was his dagger and broad, and often it did good service for Arthur's troops when they were on the march. Should they come to a stream without bridge or ford, Osla would send his men to seek the spot where the torrent was narrowest. Then he would sheath his blade, and lay it across from bank to bank. Forthwith it became a bridge so strong that it could bear

the weight of the Three Armies of Britain, and the Three Armies of the Three Neighbouring Islands, Orkney and Wight and Man. Bridgeblade would neither bend nor break, though they carried their plunder with them to boot.

Near Osla sat Ridrut, who cleared all barriers out of the path of Arthur. If he trod on rocks or anything hard, his feet struck sparks of fire, like the sparks on red-hot iron when it is taken from the forge.

Sol was there too, who could stand all day long on one foot; and Shankin, the Great Leaper of Ireland, who could jump across three hundred acres at one bound. There was no one who could leap farther than he.

Flitterfay the Winged was there. No creature living could beat him in a race across an acre; much less could he be beaten if the race were longer. And Old Roadster, with whom no one could keep pace, whether on horseback

or on foot. And Queen Gwinevere's two henchmen, whose feet were as swift as their thoughts when they carried a message for their Queen. And Rustlereed, King Arthur's herald. When he was sent on an errand by his King, he never paused to find a path, but ran straight to his destination. If his way lay through a wood, he ran along the tops of the trees. 'The blade of reed-grass bent not beneath him,' nor was the stem of the frailest weed ever known to break under the pressure of his footfall, so light was his step.

By him sat Heavyheel, beneath whose tread the highest mountain in the world was stamped to a level plain.

Then there came the Ugly Chieftain, the son of Segid the Handsome, whose mother was Kerridwen the Enchantress. He had hair upon him like a stag, and was so frightful of aspect that no one touched him in Arthur's last battle, the Battle of Camelot; for he

was taken for an evil spirit. Near him was the Comely Knight, who was so beautiful to behold that no one struck him in the Battle of Camelot; for he was taken for a helping angel. Kenwell the Good sat beside him. He was the last man to leave the Battle of Camelot, riding away on his horse, Old Grayfell.

Rearfort the Architect was there, who had built Arthur's Hall. By him sat Breakbarn with the Great Flail, who, if a barn were pointed out to him, always struck it with his iron club. The barn might be large enough to hold the crops produced by thirty ploughs; but large or small, it was all alike to him. He would beat the beams, rafters, and boards, till they were in pieces no bigger than the winnowed wheat upon the granary floor.

And there sat Utred the Tall, who could spread his red unkempt beard over the eight-and-forty rafters of the Wide White Hall of Arthur.

Brinequaffer, the son of Draintide, also, who could suck up the sea on which three hundred ships were sailing, and leave only a dry strand. He was broad-chested.

And Histhark, the son of the Hearer, whose ears were so sharp that he could hear the dew-drop fall from the blade of reed-grass to the earth; and the ant rise from her nest in the morning. Though he were buried seven cubits deep in the earth and fifty miles away, he could hear them all the same.

Scanfar, the son of the Seer, was there, who could see the gnat rise in the morning sun at Camelot, when he was as far away as Caithness. Beside him sat Medrod the Marksman, who from Camelot could shoot an arrow evenly through both the legs of a wren upon Cold Blast Bridge in Leinster. Clipmote sat by him, who could cut a hair from the eye of a gnat without hurting him.

Grimgobble and Battenbask were there, who needed so much food that if they went away from home three hundreds could hardly supply them with meat and drink. They would eat till mid-day, drink till evening, and sleep all night. No sooner had they finished a meal than they were ready to begin again. When they had had enough for twenty men they would go on eating as ravenously as if they had not tasted food for a week. They were two of the three unwelcome guests of the Island of the Mighty, for they left neither meat nor drink in the house of their host. Not a scrap of food could be found in the countryside after they had been there; neither fat nor lean, fresh nor salt, sweet nor sour, hot nor cold.

Grindull was there too, who when he had the right to crave a boon from Arthur asked for a meal that might satisfy him. He obtained it, and the Third Great Plague of Cornwall was

the preparing of that repast. Was there so much as a bird left on the moors, or a sheep in the fold? No one could coax a smile from Grindull, unless he had had enough to eat.

Dungift sat close by, who never wanted for anything he could get for the asking. If he had need of aught, when he came to a town, he would not let sleep come to the eyes of a soul in it, till he had had his will. Even in a town of three hundred houses there was no peace for any one while he was inside the gate.

Near him sat Howel, the son of Kaw, who never had made and never would make request to any lord.

Next to him sat Ol, who, as soon as he was grown to man's estate, sought and found the swine of his father, which had been lost seven years before he was born. In no less than seven herds he drove them home again.

Rueruth was beside him, who,

when he was sad, would let one of his lips drop to his girdle and turn the other over his head like a cap.

Kai's grandson was there, who was afterwards stabbed by his uncle. Arthur never forgave the man who dealt that blow.

And the Craven Chief too, who slew Kai in the end. Arthur slew him and his brothers to avenge the death of Kai.

Ector, Kai's father, was there, who when his son was a baby said to his wife, 'Lady, prithee, mark my words. Because this boy is my son, cold will be his heart and cold his hands. He will be peculiar in this—if he bears a burden in his hands or on his back, no one will be able to see it, whether it be large or small. He will also differ from other men in this—no one will be able to endure fire and water so well as he. And he will have another peculiarity—no one will ever excel him as servitor or seneschal. Ay,

and because he is my son, no one will ever be able to break his will.'

Uriel was there, who knew every language spoken by man. Though a tongue might be all new and strange to him, he could speak it as fast as the words met his ear. He knew the voices of all beasts and birds, and could hold converse with every creature under the sun.

Twenty warriors from the Marches of Fairyland, and two of the sons of Nith, King of Faerie, were there.

And the Three Bold Brothers, 'whose three shields were three gleaming glitterers; whose three spears were three pointed piercers; whose three swords were three griding gashers.' Their three grandsons, for their skill in winding the horn, were called Moote, Prize, and Rechate. Their three steeds were called Thunderer, Caperer, and Canterer. Their three dogs were called Harrow, Harkaway, and Halt.

And beside all these, a hundred and

twenty warriors more were seated at the Round Table.

Bawdewyn the Bishop blessed the feast, and Taliesin of the Radiant Brow, Chief of the Bards, made the Wide White Hall of Arthur ring with minstrelsy.

HOW PRINCE KILHUGH ARRIVED AT ARTHUR'S HALL

AS the Prince rode on, he beheld from afar the walls and towers of Arthur's Hall. When he drew rein within the shadow of the vast portal, he saw that the door was closed and barred, and an armed warrior, stalwart and strong, was standing before it.

'Is it King Arthur's custom, O Chieftain, to have a gateward stationed here?' cried Kilhugh.

'It is,' replied the warrior sternly, 'and if thou dost not hold thy peace,

scant shall be thy welcome. I am Arthur's porter every New Year's Day, therefore am I here to-night. At other times the door is guarded by the four chieftains who are set under me; for I am the chief of Arthur's porters. The others are Blandmien, and Speedguest, and Grumgruff, a man who never did any one any good in his life; and Rumbleroll, who goes on his head to save his feet. He neither holds it up to the sky, like a man, nor stretches it out towards the ground, like a brute; but he goes tumbling about the floor of the court, like nothing but a rolling stone.'

'Unbar, and let me in,' quoth Kilhugh.

'Nay,' replied the Dusky Hero with the Mighty Grasp, 'that will I not.'

'And wherefore no?' cried Kilhugh.

'The knife is in the meat and the drink is in the horn, and there is revelry in Arthur's Hall, and none

may enter in but the son of a king from a privileged country, or a craftsman bringing his craft. But think not thou that a wayfarer may be turned away discourteously from Arthur's gate. There is fodder for thy horses and food for thy dogs, and for thee and thine attendants shall collops be cooked and peppered. Food enough for fifty men shall be prepared for thee alone, and thou shalt drink the best of wine. Only be content to eat in the Guest Chamber, where strangers and sons of unprivileged kings are served, who have no right at this hour to pass into the Court. Thou shalt fare as well in the Guest Chamber as ever thou couldst in the Hall. And when thou wilt repair to rest, a silken couch shall be spread for thee, and lovely ladies shall lull thee to sleep with sweet singing. In the morning the warder will let thee in, when he opens the gate for the multitude who come to make request to Arthur. I will see

to it that the door shall be opened first for thee. Thou shalt enter alone, and choose the seat that will please thee best, from one end of the hall to the other.'

'I will have nothing of all this,' said Kilhugh. 'If thou wilt open the door, well and good; but if not, I will bring dishonour upon Arthur, and shame on thee. Here on the spot where I stand I will shout thrice and make the welkin ring again. Sounds more deadly than those three shouts have never been heard in this land. They shall resound from Land's End to Caithness, and over to Cold Blast Ridge in Ireland. Those cries shall turn the hearts of youths and maidens cold as stone. Matrons shall grow wan and weakly, and many a mother's child shall die of fright—fraught with such baleful power will be my voice.'

'Whatever clamour thou mayest choose to make,' returned the Dusky Hero with the Mighty Grasp, 'thou

shalt not enter Arthur's palace against his laws. However, I will go and speak to Arthur, and tell him thou dost crave his leave to come within.'

But for all his doughty words the Dusky Hero with the Mighty Grasp was perturbed by Kilhugh's threat; for he knew that in the days of King Lud (who, as all men know, was the brother of Cassibelan) the Island of Britain had been plagued by a fearful shriek; at the sound whereof men grew pale and feeble, women listless and sad, youths and maidens witless and woe-begone. Beasts deserted their young ones, birds left their fledglings, trees cast off their unripened fruit. The earth yielded no harvest, the waters were forsaken of fish.

Pondering this the Dusky Hero with the Mighty Grasp strode into the Hall. Arthur called to him, 'Hast come with tidings from the gate?' and he replied in stately phrase, befitting a hero of the Table Round, 'Half of my

life is passed, and half of thine. I have been in Europe and in Asia, in Africa and in the Island of Corsica, in India the Great and India the Less. I was one of thy Companions when thou didst spread the terror of thy sword from Scandinavia to Spain. I stood near thee when they crowned thee Emperor at Rome. I fought among thy warriors when thou didst conquer Greece, and when we made Syria and Scythia tremble at the coming of thy Host. I was by when thou didst slay the Dark Warrior of Ireland, and Dinorbuc the Giant, who did to death Fair Helen of Brittany. I fought by thy side in the Battle of Shades, when we brought away twelve hostages from the Dim Land under the Sea. I have been in Jerusalem and in Castle Covert-and-Clearing, built all of dead men's bones. I have been in Turning Castle, and in the Castle of Riches; and there, thou knowest, we saw nine kings of nations,

all comely men of noblest mien: yet, I protest, I never saw before a youth so handsome or so dignified as he who waits without thy portal now.'

Then cried the King, 'Thou didst walk hither to tell me of him, but hie thee back to him running at the top of thy speed. And let every man who sees the light, and every man who blinks the eye, do honour to him. Let some of my paladins offer him wine in drinking-horns studded with gold; and let others serve him with collops, cooked and peppered, till a meal can be specially prepared for himself. It is not fitting, as thou sayest, to keep a youth such as he waiting outside in the wind and the rain.'

Quoth Kai, 'By the hand of my friend, Sir King, if thou wouldst follow my counsel, thou wouldst not break the laws of thy Court for him.'

'Nay, blessed Kai,' said the King, 'it is an honour to us that chieftains

seek admittance to our palace. The greater our courtesy, the greater will be our fame and our glory and our renown.'

HOW PRINCE KILHUGH CRAVED A BOON FROM ARTHUR

THE Dusky Hero with the Mighty Grasp returned to the gate. He drew back bolt and bar, and set it wide before the Prince and his train. The men-at-arms dismounted at the horse-block in the courtyard, but Kilhugh rode on into the hall.

'Hail to thee, King Arthur,' he cried, 'Ruler and Lord of the Island of the Mighty; I greet thee, and thy guests, and thy Companions, and thy warriors. My greeting to the lowest

as well as to the highest of all that have a seat within thy hall. May thy name and thy fame and thy renown be for ever held in glorious memory throughout the length and breadth of this land.'

'Hail to thee also, noble youth,' returned Arthur. 'Thou art right welcome. Here is a place for thee between two of my Companions. Sit down and I will command my minstrels to play for thee. Honours meet for a king born to a throne shall be thine, as long as thou dost tarry at my Court; and when I bestow my gifts upon my guests, I will give the first to thee.'

But Kilhugh made answer, 'I came not hither, Sire, to eat and drink, but to crave of thee a boon. If thou wilt grant it me, I also will do thee such a service as thou mayest appoint; and I will carry the praise of thy bounty and thy power into every land whither I may go on my travels. But if thou

dost withhold my boon, I will spread ill reports of thee to the four quarters of the world. Wherever thy fame has been heard, there will I proclaim thy disgrace.'

'Ask thy boon, then, Chieftain, since thou wilt not stay at our palace,' said Arthur. '"Thou shalt have whatever thy tongue may name, as far as the wind dries, and the rain moistens, and the sun revolves, and the sea encircles, and the earth extends." Save my ship that bears me over the sea, and my mantle in which I can walk unseen, and my good sword Excalibur, and my keen lance Rongomiant. Yea, and Beamingboss my shield, and Gleaming-glaive my dagger, and Gwinevere my wife. Gladly will I grant thy boon; ask what thou wilt.'

'My request is, that thou wilt cut my hair,' said Kilhugh.

'Thy request is granted,' quoth the King.

Then Arthur called for a golden

comb and a pair of scissors with silver loops. And as he combed the hair of the Prince, he asked him who he was. 'For,' said he, 'my heart warms to thee, noble youth, and I feel thou art of my kin.'

'My name is Kilhugh,' he replied. 'My father is Prince Kilith, and my mother was a sister of the Fair Ygerne.'

'Thou art my cousin, then,' said Arthur, 'and I give thee leave to ask another boon. Ask what thou wilt. Thou shalt have whatever thy tongue may name.'

'Promise,' said Kilhugh, 'for the honour of thy kingdom to grant my boon.'

'I promise,' returned the King.

'Then do I crave of thee that thou wilt obtain for me Olwen, the daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, to be my bride. I crave this boon from thee, and thy Companions, and thy warriors, and thy friends. From Kai, thy Seneschal, and from

Bedivere, thy Butler. From Gawain, Hawk of May; from Peregrine, the Guide; from Merlin, Weaver of Spells; from Uriel, who knows all tongues. From Kaw, King of Strathclyde; from Bors, King of France; from Odgar, King of Ireland. From Mabon, the son of Modron, and Idwel, his Cousin; and from the Golden-Haired Pryderi. From Osla with the Great Dagger; from Mordrain Tall-Heron, whose is the Magic Basket; and from Gwidolwyn the Dwarf, who owns the Magic Flasks. From thy Two Chief Huntsmen, and from Hartsbane, the Chief Huntsman of Ireland; from Baybold, whose are the Wondrous Hounds; and from Allan of Pembroke, skilled in setting on the dogs. From Ewen of the Fenland, who owns the Magic Leash; from Kilith Whitehand, whose collar alone can hold the leash; and from Kilith the White, who has the only chain that will fasten the collar to that

leash. From the two cubs of the Werewolf; and from Kenneder the Wild, who alone can hold them in. From Gwyn, the son of Nith, King of Faerie. From thy Two Attendants, Perifer the Cauldron-bearer, and Pedifer thy Foot-holder. From the Two Tall Brothers; and from the Three Bold Brothers, "whose three shields are three gleaming glitterers, whose three spears are three pointed piercers, whose three swords are three griding gashers."

'For the sake of the daughters of the Island of the Mighty, bedecked with collars of gold, I crave your help to seek this maiden. For the sake of Gwinevere the Peerless, and of her sister. For the sake of Lynette of the Magic Ring: whoever conceals the stone of her ring, it will conceal him. For the sake of Cordelia, the daughter of King Lear, the loveliest maiden in this Island, and in the Three Neighbouring Islands; for whom Gwyn, the

son of Nith, and Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn fight every first of May until the Day of Doom. For the sake of Iseult la Belle and of Iseult aux Blanches Mains. And of Ellila, who will live three ages. And of Enid, and of Elaine, and of Angarad of the Golden Hand.'

All these did Kilhugh, the son of Prince Kilith, adjure to aid him to obtain his boon.

Then said Arthur, 'O Prince, I have never heard of this maiden; I have never heard of her kindred. But I will send messengers to seek her; only grant them time in which to find her.'

'To-day is New Year's Day,' said Kilhugh. 'I give them from this hour till the last day of the year.'

HOW THEY SOUGHT IN VAIN FOR OLWEN

SO Arthur's messengers set out to seek the maiden. Each knight took a different road, and they passed throughout the length and breadth of the Island of the Mighty. Every soul they met they questioned, saying, 'Knowest thou aught of Olwen, the daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants?' But no one answered 'Yea.' They wandered into far-off lands and foreign climes, but they never met any one who had heard of the maid. Nor could they hear of

her kindred; for no one could tell so much as where to ask for tidings of them.

Day after day the year passed by; and, as the last day was closing in, the messengers met again in the Wide White Hall of Arthur. Each man told his story, and in the end they found that they were as far from knowing where Olwen dwelt as they had been when they set out.

Then Kilhugh rose up from his place in wrath. 'O King,' he cried, 'all others who have made request to thee have received each man his boon. I alone lack mine. I will depart, and with me thine honour shall depart also.'

But Kai cried out, indignant, 'Too bold art thou, O Prince, thus to cast reproach on Arthur! Go forth with me and my comrades, and let us search the world together. We will not part till we have found the maiden or till thou art forced to own she is not of the race of earth.'

HOW KILHUGH SET OUT TO SEEK OLWEN

KING ARTHUR chose a band of his Companions to go with Kilhugh — notable knights and fitted for the quest.

First of all he called on Kai himself. Very cunning was Kai. The best of spies and the best of sentinels was he. He could make himself as tall as the tallest tree in the forest and view the country for miles around. He could hide himself in lakes and rivers, and stay under water nine days and nine nights at a spell. So fiery

was his nature that when his Companions were famished with cold they could kindle a fire with his finger as with a torch. Such was the heat that glowed in him that he could walk through drenching rain as dry as in the heat of June; and whatever he carried would not get wet for a handbreadth above and a handbreadth below his hand. He did not soon grow weary, for he could go nine days and nights without sleep. It was madness to fight with him, for no leech could cure a wound made by his sword.

Arthur did not need to call on Bedivere, for he was Kai's brother-in-arms, and never hung back from any adventure on which Kai was bound. No one in this Island could match him for fleetness of foot, except Arthur himself and Arthur's messenger. He had but one hand; yet he could give more wounds in battle than any three warriors together. His spear would

make a wound as great as nine spears in the hands of his foes.

The King called on Uriel, who knew all tongues of men and beasts. He would be able to interpret for the embassy of Arthur in foreign lands.

And on Gawain, the Hawk of May, because he never returned from any adventure till he had achieved it. The best of soldiers, alike on horseback and on foot, was he. He was King Arthur's nephew, the son of his sister, Morgan le Fay; and he was one of the Three Golden-Tongued Knights in the Court of Arthur.

The King called on Merlin to go, because he was a mighty man of magic. He had power to cast a spell over the knights, to make them invisible to others, though able to see themselves. Thus they could pass through any land, without fear or danger.

And Arthur called on Peregrine the Guide to lead them; for he was as

good a guide in a country where he had never been as he was in his own land.

'Go forth, O Chieftains,' said King Arthur, 'with the Prince upon this quest. Great will be the fame of your achievement.'

The Seven Champions rode out, without delay, through the wide gate of Arthur's palace. On they journeyed day by day, until they came at last to a boundless plain. It stretched away, vast and dim, and seemed to have no end. And they went pricking over heath and turf, till they descried a castle, far away on the edge of the moor. The morning mist was not more shadowy than were its battlements and towers, but as the knights rode forward they perceived that it was the largest and stateliest castle in the world. They turned their horses' heads towards it, and rode on all day long; but when evening fell, they were no nearer than they had been at dawn.

All the day following they rode thither, but at sundown the castle seemed as distant as ever, and the third evening found them still very far away.

'Surely,' quoth Gawain, 'yonder is the Fleeting Castle—clearly to be seen from afar, but never to be found by mortal man.'

HOW THEY HEARD TIDINGS OF OLWEN

NOTHING daunted, the Seven Champions set out again on the morrow. And lo! the castle did not seem to flee before them any more. As they drew near, they beheld a flock of sheep feeding upon the grass outside it. Never had they seen the like before. Thousands and thousands of sheep covered the plains on the right hand and on the left, till it seemed as if that flock could have no end.

A shepherd was sitting on the top of a knoll close by, watching the

sheep. His dog lay at his feet. The man was no less than a giant in stature, and was clad in a rough cloak of skins. The dog was larger than a horse nine summers old, and never was shaggier dog than he. Yet for all his curly coat he was a mastiff, not a sheep-dog; nevertheless, he took such good care of the flock, that he never let a lamb stray away, much less a ewe or a ram. But when he was not guarding the sheep, he was the most mischievous animal alive. He let no chance of doing harm escape him. With his fiery breath he would burn to the ground all the dead trees and bushes on the plain. There was no rest for any one when he was by.

When the knights beheld the giant herdsman and his countless flock, they knew that he must be a chieftain of high rank.

Said Kai to Uriel, who knew all tongues, 'It were best for thee to go

and greet the man upon the hillock yonder.'

'Kai,' he answered, 'I agreed when we set out to go as far as thou shouldst go. I made no promise to go farther.'

'Let us go together, then,' said Kai.

'Have no fear,' said Merlin, 'I have cast a spell over the dog, he will not try to hurt you.'

Kai and Kilhugh and Uriel climbed the little hill on which the shepherd sat, and saluted him in friendly fashion, saying, 'Is it well with thee, O Herdsman?'

And he answered civilly enough, 'May it be as well with you as it is with me.'

'Surely thou art a mighty chief?' said they.

'None have ever dared to injure me but my own kin,' quoth he.

'Who is the owner of the sheep thou art guarding, and whose is the castle over there?' they asked.

'Ye must be dullards indeed,' cried the herdsman, 'to have lived so long and not to know that! Every one else in the world knows very well that this is the Castle of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants.'

'Might we make so bold as to ask thy name?' said they.

'My name is Constantine,' he replied, 'and I am the brother of Thornogre Thistlehair, the Chief of the Giants. A hard brother, truly, has he been to me! He has seized on all the lands and goods my father left me, and now I am forced to feed his sheep, instead of ruling my own domains. Did I not say that none had ever dared to injure me but my own kin? And as for you, who may ye be?'

'We are an embassy from Arthur,' they replied, 'and we have come hither seeking for Olwen, the daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants.'

'Alas! alas!' cried the Herdsman, 'no one ever came here on that quest and returned alive! Hearken to me and heed my counsel. Go back this very day to your own land, lest ye perish like those who came before you.'

'Nay, Chief,' cried Kilhugh, 'that will not I;' and Kai cried shame on any knight of Arthur's Hall that should do so.

The Herdsman looked Kilhugh in the face. 'Tell me who thou art, Chieftain,' said he.

'I am Kilhugh, the son of Kilith, and my mother was the sister of the Fair Ygerne.'

'Thou art my nephew,' returned he; 'thy mother was the sister of my wife. And thou hast come to seek Olwen?'

'I have,' said the Prince; 'nor will I retreat till I have found her.'

'Alas! alas!' cried Constantine the Herdsman, 'I would have thee hasten from this land forthwith. But since

thou wilt not go, and my wife would be rejoiced to see thee, I beg that thou and thy comrades will spend the night at my house.'

Then Kilhugh gave his uncle a golden ring; but as it was too small for him Constantine put it in a finger of one of the gloves that hung from his girdle to mark his rank. He rose to go, and he and his dog drove the sheep home.

THE HERDSMAN'S WIFE

WHEN he reached his dwelling, Constantine the Herdsman gave his glove to his wife. She soon pulled out the ring.

'Where didst thou find this?' cried she, amazed. 'Luck comes but seldom to thee.'

The Herdsman answered, jesting with her, 'Where should such things be found but floating on the tide? Go down to the shore and catch fish like those that came into my net to-day, mayhap thou shalt find as fair a corpse upon the waves as

the one from whose finger I took that ring.'

'Does the sea, then,' she answered, 'let its victims keep their gold? Show me that fair corpse, my husband.'

'No, dear wife,' he said, 'it was a living man who gave the ring to me. His name is Kilhugh, the son of Kilith, and his mother was a sister of the Fair Ygerne. He has come to seek Olwen for his bride. He and his companions will be here to-day.'

The Chieftain's wife was glad, and yet her heart misgave her. Brief joy it seemed to her to greet her sister's son before he should go forth upon the quest that was the doom of every knight who had essayed it heretofore.

Meantime the Seven Champions were on their way to the herdsman's abode. When the lady heard the trampling of their horses' hoofs hard by, she ran blithely forth to welcome them with outstretched hands, as

though she would have clasped them in her arms.

But Kai no sooner caught sight of her than he was filled with dread. 'No knight upon ground could suffer the embrace of yonder dame and live,' thought he. Thereupon he snatched up a log from the pile of firewood in the courtyard, and as she threw her arms round Kilhugh's neck he thrust it between her hands. It was nothing but a twisted coil when she unloosed her grasp.

'Madam,' said Kai, 'if thou hadst squeezed me thus, no one would have favoured me again for my beauty. Thou hadst made a speedy end of my good looks. Luckless love, in sooth, for me.'

The herdsman's wife led them into the house, and supper was served. She made her guests what cheer she could; but there was not so much as one silver goblet placed upon the board, for Thornogre Thistlehair had

robbed his brother of all the gold and silver he possessed. Nor had he left him a single chair to grace his hall, deeming that benches were grandeur enough for the house of a Herdsman.

After supper they all went forth to disport themselves; but, by and by, the herdsman's wife asked Kai and Uriel to come within. She led them to the chimney corner, where stood a great stone coffer; and when she lifted the lid, lo! there rose up a handsome lad, with yellow curling hair.

'What a pity,' cried Uriel, 'to keep a boy like that shut up in a chest of stone! Not his, I trow, the hands that did the wrong for which he is pining here.'

'Truly,' said the poor lady, 'it is no misdeed of his that is being visited upon him. Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, has slain my three-and-twenty sons; this is the only child I have left. And I have no hope of keeping him any more than the rest.'

'What is his name?' asked Kai.

'He has no name as yet,' she answered. 'I may say that he has lived in this coffer from his birth. Nothing noteworthy has befallen him; and if he lives like this to the end of his days, I fear me he will never gain a name by his achievements. Yet if I let him go abroad, Thornogre Thistle-hair will slay him certainly.'

'Let him come with me and be my comrade,' quoth Kai. 'He shall not be slain, I promise thee, unless I am slain along with him.'

'Most gladly would I have him go with thee,' said the lady; 'but tell me now what brings you to this land?'

'We have come to seek for Olwen,' they replied; 'Prince Kilhugh can wed no other. It is the destiny his stepmother has laid on him.'

'Alas!' cried the lady, 'shall all my kindred perish in that quest? My three-and-twenty sons have gone forth, one by one, and fallen; wherefore

should Kilhugh go to certain death? Nay, Chieftains, hearken to my counsel, and go home. No one at the castle has seen you yet; hasten away before Thornogre Thistlehair finds you out.'

'Truly,' they answered, 'go we will not, till we have seen the maiden.'

While they were talking, Kai had been casting about in his mind for some device by which they might see her unknown to Thornogre Thistlehair.

'Does the maiden ever come hither?' he asked.

'She comes every Saturday to wash her hair,' replied the herdsman's wife. 'She leaves behind her all her rings and jewels in the basin she uses; but she never asks for them again, nor does she ever send a servant for them.'

'Would she come if you asked her so to do?' said Kai.

'She would,' returned the lady; 'but I will not send for her unless ye first

pledge me your faith that ye will not carry her off against her will. I will betray no one who trusts me.'

'We pledge thee our faith,' they answered; and a messenger was despatched to the castle.

OLWEN

PRESENTLY Olwen came. She was dressed in a robe of flame-coloured silk, and round her neck she wore a collar of ruddy gold, set with emeralds and rubies, gems of price. 'More yellow was her hair than the flower of the broom, and her skin was whiter than the foam of the wave; and fairer were her hands and her fingers than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain. The eye of the trained hawk, the glance of the three-mewed falcon was not brighter than hers.

Her bosom was more snowy than the breast of the white swan; her cheek was redder than the reddest roses. Whoso beheld her was filled with her love. Four white trefoils sprang up wherever she trod: therefore was she called Olwen.'

Olwen of the White Footprints stepped into the house and took a seat on the foremost bench by Kilhugh, and as soon as he saw her he knew her.

'Ah, maiden,' said he, 'thou art she whom I have loved. Come away with me. Many a day have I loved thee.'

'I cannot,' she answered, 'for I have given my word to my father that I will not go without his leave. My bridal day is fated to be the day of his death. Whatever is to be will be. However, I can counsel thee, if thou wilt be guided by me. Go to my father, grant him everything he demands, and thou wilt win me; but if thou dost deny his least request thou

wilt lose me. Well will it be with thee if thou escape with thy life.'

'I will not fail to follow thy counsel,' said Kilhugh, 'if by good luck I come within thy father's hall.'

Then 'fair Olwen of the slender eyebrow, pure of heart,' returned to the castle.

THORNOGRE THISTLEHAIR, CHIEF OF THE GIANTS

NO sooner had Olwen departed than the knights took counsel; and they determined to go that very night to the castle, and force their way into the hall of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants. The night was dark, without moon or stars, when the Seven Champions set out; but they needed no other guide than the white trefoils that had grown wherever Olwen's feet had pressed.

Now Thornogre Thistlehair was the most inhospitable giant in the whole

world. He had nine warders at his gate and nine watchdogs to guard the way to his castle. But as the knights approached, not one of those nine watchdogs barked; and the warriors killed them all in silence. Then they came to the nine porters at the gate, and rushed upon them sword in hand; yet they uttered neither shout nor cry; but one and all sank down slain without a groan. Thus the Seven Champions passed the outer gate, bolted and barred, and crossed the court to the door of the great hall. They opened it and entered.

There sat Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, upon his throne. Frightful was he to behold. His eyebrows had grown so long that they had fallen over his eyes; and as to his stature, he was taller and broader than any three ordinary giants. Three poisoned darts lay within reach of his hand.

The Seven Champions saluted him.

'The greeting of gentle and simple be unto thee, Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants,' said they.

'Who are ye, and whence come ye?' he returned.

'We are an embassy from Arthur,' they replied, 'and we are come to seek the hand of Olwen, thy daughter, for Kilhugh, the son of Kilith.'

'Where are my pages and my slaves?' roared the giant. 'Raise up my two eyebrows that have fallen over my eyes. Bring hither the props to lift them with, and let me see what sort of a son-in-law ye have brought me.'

They propped up his eyebrows with much ado, and he gazed fiercely upon Kilhugh. 'Come again to-morrow,' said he, 'and ye shall have an answer.'

The Seven Champions withdrew; but as they were leaving the hall the giant flung one of his poisoned darts after them. Bedivere caught it, and cast it back at him with an aim so true that it wounded the giant sorely in the

knee. 'In sooth, a most discourteous son-in-law,' he cried. 'I shall never be able to walk so well as long as I live, for no balm can be found to cure this wound. This poisoned steel hurts me like the sting of a gadfly. Woe to the smith who forged it, and the anvil where it was wrought!'

But the warriors had gone out into the night.

HOW THEY WENT TO THE CASTLE THE SECOND TIME

THE Seven Champions spent the night at the house of Constantine the Herdsman; but the next morning they were up with the first streak of dawn. In haste they clad themselves in gorgeous attire, hastened to the castle, and made their way to the great hall.

'Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants,' they cried, 'give us thy daughter, whom we have come to seek, and we will give thee her dower and her maiden fee. It shall be paid to thee, her father

and lord, and to her two kinswomen. But if thou wilt not hear us, thou shalt come by thy death for her sake.'

The giant made answer, saying, 'Her four great-grandmothers and her four great-grandfathers are still alive, and I can do nothing in this matter without consulting them. Come again for my answer. I will take counsel with them.'

'Do so,' said they, 'and we will break our fast.'

As they went he took the second of his poisoned darts and threw it after them. But Merlin caught it, and sent it hurtling back at him. It struck him in the chest and pierced through his back. 'Truly a most ungentle son-in-law,' he cried; 'this hard steel hurts me like the bite of a horse-leech. Woe to the fire where it was heated, and to the smith that fashioned it! Henceforth I shall not be able to climb a hill without being short of breath. I

shall often have pains in my chest, and many a time I shall hate the sight of food.'

But the warriors were gone to their meal.

HOW THEY WENT TO THE CASTLE THE THIRD TIME

ON the third day they came again to the palace; but Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, as soon as he heard them coming, shouted aloud, 'Do not dare to cast another dart at me, unless ye would have me kill you every one. Where are my servants? Raise the supports of my eyebrows that I may see what sort of man my son-in-law may be.'

As they did so, he snatched up the third poisoned dart and threw it at them. But Kilhugh caught it,

and hurled it back with such force that it struck the giant in one of his eyes and came out at the back of his head. 'In good sooth, a most uncivil son-in-law,' cried he. 'Now, as long as I live my sight will not be so good as it has been. I shall not be able to walk in the wind without feeling the cold in my eyes. At times my head will feel hot and heavy, and I shall be troubled with dizziness whenever the new moon shines. Woe to the forge where this dart was shapen! Like the bite of a mad dog is the stroke of this poisoned steel.'

But the warriors were gone to meat.

HOW KILHUGH KEPT HIS PROMISE TO OLWEN

ON the morrow the Seven Champions returned to the palace. And in the great hall they cried out, 'Throw no more darts at us, Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, if thou wouldst not have greater pain and torment and ill to bear.' And Kilhugh cried, 'Give me the maiden, or death shall befall thee for her sake.'

'Where is the knight who seeks my daughter's hand?' said the giant.

They placed a chair for Kilhugh, face to face with him, and Thornogre

Thistlehair glared upon the Prince. Then he began to talk with him, saying, 'Thou art the man who has come hither to seek my daughter?'

'I am,' replied the Prince.

'Promise to deal fairly and justly with me,' said the giant, 'and on my part I will deal fairly and justly with thee. When thou hast brought me all that I require I will grant thy request, and thou shalt wed my daughter.'

'I promise to deal fairly and justly by thee,' said Kilhugh; 'ask what thou wilt.'

'I will do so,' said he. 'Seest thou that high hill over there?'

'I do,' said the Prince.

'Good,' returned the giant. 'I require thee to have that hill plucked up by the roots. The land where it stood must be ploughed and sown and the seed ripened in a single day. With the corn I mean to make bread and beer fit for the wedding feast of my

daughter. But, hear me, that land must be cleared, ploughed, sown, and reaped between the sunrise and sunset of the same day.'

'It will be easy for me to accomplish this,' said Kilhugh, 'though thou mayest think it will not be easy.'

'If that be easy for thee,' said Thornogre Thistlehair, 'I am about to demand that which thou wilt not find easy, I trow. This land will be so rugged that no one can plough it but Amatheon the Husbandman, the Son of Don, he who fought the Battle of the Trees, when he went with Gwydion his brother to bring up the lapwing and the roebuck and the whelp from the Twilight Land. Gwydion changed the very bushes into warriors to help them when they were hard pressed; but for all their bravery it was one of the Three Frivolous Battles of the Island of the Mighty. Now Amatheon will not come to thee of his own free

will, and no power of thine can make him.'

'This will be easy for me,' answered Kilhugh, 'though thou dost think it will not be easy.'

'If thou shouldst accomplish this, I require that which thou canst not compass. Govannon, the son of Don, must come to the headland to turn the plough. He will not work of his own free will, except for a lawful king, and thou wilt not be able to force him.'

'It will be easy for me to do this,' said Kilhugh.

'Yet I require that which thou canst not do, though thou shouldst bring this to pass. I want the two dun oxen of the Ploughman Elf yoked together to plough the land. He will not spare them with a good will, and thou canst not take them from him.'

'I shall do this with ease,' said Kilhugh.

'Do this, if thou canst, yet I want that which thou canst not get. The

Yellow Ox of Spring and the Brindled Bull must be yoked together to satisfy me.'

'I can compass that with ease.'

'Though thou compass this, there is that to be done which thou canst not contrive. I must have the two horned oxen which are to be found, one on this side of the peaked mountain and the other beyond it, yoked together in the same plough. They are King Nennius and King Dravellor, who have been changed into oxen for their pride and their sins.'

'Easy enough will it be for me to achieve this.'

'Though this be easy for thee, I require that which thou wilt not find easy. Dost thou see a field of red earth yonder, which looks as if it had been tilled many long years ago? The ridges are flattened now by the wind and the rain; for I alone, and my kindred, can remember the time when it was ploughed.'

'I see the field,' said Kilhugh.

'On the day when I first beheld my wife, the mother of the maiden thou hast come to woo, I had nine bushels of flax sown in that red earth. Not a seed, whether black or white, has sprouted since. Dost thou see that newly-ploughed land over there? I require that the nine bushels of flax be collected from the soil and measured with the bushel I have by me, so that not one grain be missing. Then it must be sown again in the freshly-turned field, to make flax for my daughter's wedding veil.'

'I shall accomplish this with ease, though thou dost think it will be hard for me.'

'If thou dost accomplish this, there is that required which thou canst not obtain—the Triple Harp of the Master Minstrel to play to us on the evening of my daughter's wedding. No man need wait for a harper to play that harp for him; if he asks it to play, it

will play of itself, and when he commands it to stop, it will stop. The Master Minstrel will not give it to thee for the asking, and thou wilt find no means of forcing it from him.'

'I shall find means easily enough, though thou dost not think I shall.'

'But I require that which thou canst not obtain—honey, nine times sweeter than virgin honey, and pure from bee-bread and wax. It is to make mead for the wedding feast.'

'It will be easy for me to do this, though thou mayest think it will not be easy.'

'Be that as it may, it is needful for thee to procure me the Bushel of Hornfiller, the most precious of all the vessels in the world. No other is fit to contain the mead that I will have made from that honey for the banquet. He will not give it thee of his own accord, and thou canst not get it against his will.'

'This will be easy for me, though

thou dost imagine it will not be so.'

'There is still that to procure which thou canst not obtain—the Basket of Mordrain Tall-Heron. If food for one man be put into it, food for a hundred can be taken out. If all the men in the world assembled, thrice nine men at a time, the food that every man wished for would be found in it.'

'I shall obtain this, though thou dost fancy I shall not find it possible.'

'Get it, if thou canst; but thou wilt fail to procure that which remains to be got—the horn of Brimbeaker, to furnish us with draughts at the feast on the night of the wedding. Though all the men in the world assembled, thrice nine men at a time, the drink that every man desired would be found therein. Brimbeaker will not part with it, except by force, and thou wilt not be able to overcome him.'

'I can achieve this, though thou dost think me unable for it.'

'If thou canst, well and good; but I must have yet another thing, and it cannot be procured by thee. Some of my guests at the banquet will want fresh milk to drink. My dairymaids cannot keep milk enough for them fresh, unless we can have the Bottles of the Lake Lady, in which no liquid ever turns sour. She will not give them to thee of her own free will, and thou canst not compel her.'

'I can contrive that easily enough, though thou dost not think I can.'

'Though thou dost obtain this, there is yet that required which thou canst not obtain—the Cauldron of Cruseward the Cauldron-Keeper, steward of Odgar, King of Ireland. If a man would cook food for a coward in it, he may wait till Doomsday for the water to boil; but a brave man's meat is ready for him as soon as it is put therein. In that cauldron and no other must all the meat be prepared for thy wedding feast.'

'Easily shall I obtain this, though thou dost think it will be hard for me.'

'Though thou dost achieve this, there remains that which thou wilt fail to accomplish. Hard will be thy search for the Manhound of Erin. Sleepless will be thy nights and weary thy days while thou art seeking him; but unless he be found thou shalt not have my daughter.'

'I shall obtain this, though thou dost deem it cannot be.'

'Yet I have that to ask for, which thou canst not bring. I must needs wash my hair for the wedding, but it is so matted that it will never be disentangled, unless I can wet it with the Charmed Balsam that is kept by the Jet-black Sorceress, daughter of the Snow-white Sorceress, at the Source of the Brook of Sorrow, on the confines of the Twilight Land.'

'I shall bring it to thee without fail, though thou dost think otherwise.'

'There still remains that which thou canst not get. The balsam must not cool before I receive it, and no vessels can keep it warm but the flasks of Gwidolwyn the Dwarf. If a hot liquid be poured into them it will never grow cold; though they were filled in the East and carried to the West they would still be warm at the journey's end. Gwidolwyn the Dwarf will not part with them willingly, and it is out of thy power to compel him.'

'Though thou dost fancy this will be difficult, I shall accomplish it with ease.'

'So much the better, but I require that which thou canst not accomplish. I must shave my beard for the wedding, and the only razor I can use is the tusk of the Boarheaded Branch-breaker. It must be plucked out of his skull while he is living, or it will be of no use to me.'

'I shall bring that without fail, though thou dost not think I can keep my word.'

'But there is that to be done which thou canst not do. No one in the world can pluck it out of his head but Odgar, King of Ireland. Thou canst not force him to do it for thee.'

'I shall easily achieve this.'

'But I demand that which thou canst not compass. I would not trust any one to use that tusk but Kaw of Strathclyde. He is the only man who can shave me. He rules over the Three Hundreds of North Britain, and never, with his goodwill, does he leave his kingdom. Thou wilt find it impossible to oblige him to do so.'

'I shall not find this impossible, though thou dost think it too hard for me.'

'Yet I require something thou canst not achieve. My hair is so thick and coarse that there is not a comb or a pair of scissors in the world that will smooth and cut it without breaking, except the comb and the scissors and

the razor that are to be found between the ears of Burstingboar the Widewaster, the son of Prince Tared. No one can get them from him by fair means, and thou canst not force him to give them up.'

'It will be easy for me to procure them, though thou dost not think I can keep this promise.'

'Though that should be accomplished by thee, there is that to be done which thou canst not do. No one can hunt Burstingboar the Widewaster without Hartsbane the Hunter. He is the most cunning huntsman of Ireland.'

'I shall easily induce him to come, though thou dost think it will be hard enough for me.'

'I still require something that thou wilt not get. The son of Prince Tared, Burstingboar the Widewaster, will never be hunted without Tracktrail, the hound of Spuramain, Ardent in the Chase.'

'I shall obtain him with ease, though

thou dost think I cannot make good my word.'

'But though thou dost obtain him, there is something needful which thou canst not obtain. No one can hold him in without the leash of Ewen of the Fenland.'

'I shall come by that easily, though thou dost imagine I cannot.'

'When thou hast got it, there will be another thing necessary which thou canst not obtain. No collar in the world can hold the leash but the collar of Kilith White Hand.'

'That, too, I shall procure with ease, though thou dost imagine I shall not.'

'But when thou hast obtained it, something else will be wanted which thou canst not get—the chain of Kilith the White, to fasten the collar to the leash.'

'I shall be able to get that, though thou dost think it out of my power to do so.'

'Though thou dost get this, there is

yet that which thou wilt not get. There is no huntsman in the world who can hunt with that hound but Mabon, the son of Modron. He was taken from his mother when three nights old; and whether he be alive or dead, no one knows what has become of him.'

'It will be easy for me to get Mabon, the son of Modron, to come; though thou dost fancy it is more than I can do.'

'Yet there is that to be done which thou canst not bring to pass. White Wraith, the wondrous steed, swift as the waves, must be obtained from Gwetho, to bear Mabon to the hunt of the Widewaster. Gwetho will refuse to give him to thee, and thou canst not break his will.'

'I shall not find that difficult, though thou dost fancy it impossible.'

'Be it so; but thou wilt fail to achieve this. Idwel, Mabon's cousin, must be found; or all search for the Elfin Huntsman will be vain.'

'I shall find him with ease.'

'There is yet something to be done which thou canst not do. The two cubs of the Werewolf must be procured.'

'I shall procure them easily, though thou dost think otherwise.'

'But I must have another thing, and thou canst not procure it. The only leash that can hold the two cubs of the Werewolf must be made of the beard of Dissul Longbeard. It must be plucked out with wooden tweezers while he is alive. Now, as long as he has a breath in his body, he will never suffer such dishonour to be done to him; and if he were dead it would be no use to make a leash from his hair, because it would break.'

'This I can compass easily, though thou dost not think so.'

'If thou shouldst compass this, there remains that which thou canst not compass. Only Kenneder the Wild can hold in the cubs with the leash, and he is nine times wilder than

the wildest creature on the mountains. Thou wilt never get him to hold them for thee, nor wilt thou ever get my daughter.'

'I shall get him to hold the cubs for me easily enough, though thou dost not believe I shall.'

'There is yet that to be obtained which thou canst not procure. Race-apace and Boundoft must be at the hunt, for they are as swift as the wind, and were never let loose on a beast they did not kill. Burstingboar the Widewaster can never be brought down without them.'

'It will give me no trouble to do this.'

'But I require that which thou wilt find hard enough. Allan of Pembroke is skilled in letting loose the dogs for hunting. The Widewaster will never be hunted without him.'

'I shall easily induce him to come.'

'Still there is that to be compassed which thou canst not contrive. Until

Bors, King of France, shall come, it will be impossible to hunt Burstingboar the Widewaster. It would not be becoming for him to leave his dominions, and he will not come to please thee.'

'I shall persuade him to do so, though thou mayest think it more than I can do.'

'Bring him if thou canst; but I demand what thou wilt not be able to contrive. The Three Bold Brothers must go to the hunt of Burstingboar the Widewaster. It cannot take place without them. "Their three shields are three gleaming glitterers, their three spears are three pointed piercers, their three swords are three griding gashers." Their three horses are called Thunderer and Caperer and Canterer. Their three hounds are called Harrow, Harkaway, and Halt. Their three grandsons, for their skill in blowing the bugle for the chase, are called Moote, Prize and Rechate. Their

three wives are famed for their clear voices. Their three daughters are praised for their sweet singing. Their three handmaidens are the daughters of those three mighty men, the Courteous Chieftain and the Sombre Knight and the Half-Man. These three brothers must wind the horn, and the hunters will set up such a shout that men shall think the sky is falling.'

'This, too, I shall bring to pass, though thou dost think it too hard for me.'

'So be it; but I require that which thou wilt fail to achieve. Bursting-boar the Widewaster cannot be hunted without Gwyn, the son of Nith. He has been sent to guard the elves in the Twilight Land lest they should harm the race of man. He will never be spared from his duty.'

'I shall be able to do this with ease, though thou dost think that it will not be easy for me.'

'There is still that to be done which

thou canst not do. No horse in the world can be found fit for Gwyn, the son of Nith, to ride on in the hunt, but the Black Horse of the Seas.'

'That will be easy for me to obtain, though thou dost fancy it will be impossible.'

'But there is yet that required which thou canst not obtain — the sword of Garnard the Giant. No other sword will slay the Widewaster. Garnard will never give it to thee peaceably, nor wilt thou ever be able to get it from him.'

'I shall get that easily, though thou dost think that I shall not obtain it.'

'If thou dost obtain it, there is something more which thou canst not obtain. Arthur and his Companions must hunt Burstingboar the Widewaster. Mighty is he, and strong are his Companions; and thou wilt not be able to compel them to join the chase. Hard will be thy labour to procure these marvels, toilsome thy days, and

wakeful thy nights; but unless thou dost bring them every one, thou shalt never wed my daughter.'

But Kilhugh made answer: 'I have knights, and huntsmen, and horses, and hounds, and Arthur for my kinsman. He will obtain for me all these wonders, and I shall win thy daughter for my bride. As for thee, thou shalt lose thy life.'

'Go forth,' said the giant; 'and remember that while thou art on this quest, I will demand from thee neither food nor raiment for my daughter, thy betrothed. When thou hast achieved all these adventures Olwen shall be thy bride.'

HOW THEY OBTAINED THE SWORD OF GARNARD THE GIANT.

FORTY of the Impossible Things of the Island of the Mighty did Kilhugh promise to perform ere he rose up. When Thornogre Thistle-hair had made an end of his discourse, the Seven Champions departed from the Castle. They took leave of the Herdsman and his wife, and the golden-haired lad stepped out of the coffer to go with them, for he was to be Kai's Comrade from that day. Thus they set forth from the realms of the Chief of the Giants.

They journeyed on from dawn till dusk, till at length they beheld a vast castle, as large as the largest in the world. As they rode up to it, lo! a great black man, as big as three men of ordinary stature, strode out of the great gate. The knights saluted him courteously.

'Good man, where dost thou come from?' said they.

'Out of the castle, of course,' he replied.

'To whom does the castle belong?' they inquired.

'Well-a-day, ye must be dunces, indeed, to ask such a question! Who does not know that this is the castle of Garnard the Giant?'

'Does Garnard the Giant treat strangers with courtesy?'

'Ah, Chieftains,' answered he, 'no guest that ever went into that castle came out of it alive. For that matter, no traveller is allowed to enter in who does not ply a craft.'

Thereupon the Black Man went his

way, and the Seven Champions rode on to the gate. No porter stood without, so Uriel called aloud to know if there was one within. 'There is a porter here,' replied a voice. 'But as for thee, if thou art able to speak, why dost thou shout in that fashion?'

'Open the door,' said Uriel.

'I will not open it,' returned the gate ward.

'But wherefore no?' they demanded.

'The knife is in the meat and the wine is in the horn, and there is revelry in the hall of Garnard the Giant. Only for a craftsman, who brings his craft, will the gate be opened to-night.'

'But listen, porter,' said Kai. 'I bring my craft with me.'

'And what may be thy craft?'

'I am a burnisher of swords, the best at that craft in the world; for there is not a burnisher alive who can excel me.'

'I will tell this to Garnard the

Giant,' said the gatekeeper, 'and bring thee word again.'

So the porter went into the hall, and Garnard called to him, saying, 'What news from the gate?'

'There is a company without desiring to enter,' he answered.

'Didst thou ask if any of them plied a craft?' returned the giant.

'I did,' said the porter; 'and one of them declares he is full skilful in polishing swords.'

'We have need of him then. Long have I sought for some one able to furbish my sword. Let him in, for he brings his craft with him.'

So the porter unbarred the heavy door, and Kai entered alone and saluted the giant. They placed a seat for him opposite to his host, and Garnard began to ask him questions, saying, 'Is it true, O man, as I have been told, that thou art skilled in polishing swords?'

'No one can do that better than I,' said Kai.

Forthwith the giant called for his sword, and commanded that it should be given to him. Kai drew forth a bluish whetstone from under his arm and asked the giant how he would have it polished. 'I am so skilful,' said he, 'that I can make a sword glitter with a white or with a blue lustre, as I choose.'

'Do whichever thou thinkest best,' said the giant; 'I leave it to thee. Polish my sword as thou wouldst do thine own.'

So Kai furbished half the blade and put it into his hand. 'How does that please thee?' said he.

'There are many fine things in my kingdom,' he replied, 'and many that I prize highly; but if the remainder of my sword could be made like that, I should prefer it before all my treasures. Truly I am amazed that so clever a man as thou art should be wandering about, without so much as one travelling companion.'

'Indeed, honoured Sir,' returned Kai, 'I have a companion, but he is not skilled in this craft.'

'And where is he?' inquired the giant.

'Send the warden to the gate,' quoth Kai, 'and by this sign he will know him: the head of his lance will spring upwards from the shaft, draw blood from the wind, and fall back upon the shaft again.'

So the porter opened the gate once more, and presently Bedivere came into the hall.

'Bedivere is a cunning craftsman,' said Kai, 'though he is not skilful in this art.'

Meantime the Five Champions who remained without were wondering what might be the fortunes of Kai and Bedivere within. At last the son of Constantine the Herdsman scaled the wall, and helped his companions to climb over also, till they were all five in the courtyard. Three wards they

had to pass before they could reach the hall where the giant was holding high revel. The Herdsman's son bade his fellows keep close to him; and they passed the three wards without being heard or seen. 'Son of Constantine,' said his comrades to him, 'the honour of this feat is thine! Thou art, of all men, the best scaler of walls. Bolts and bars are of no avail against thee.' Thenceforth his name was Baulkbar, the son of Constantine. Well, in after days, did he prove that he deserved his name. For it was King Arthur's fate to suffer three imprisonments. He was three nights in the prison of Wen Pendragon, three nights in the dark prison under the stone, and three nights in the prison which was built of the bones of the Romans, whom Caractacus slaughtered when they taunted him, saying, 'The Britons could not hold this land, without their forests to flee into.' 'The same to us the open or covert,' said he.

'We will burn down our forests and defend our country by strength of body and heart.' Therefore was the prison called 'Castle Covert and Clearing.' One youth released Arthur from these three imprisonments, his cousin Baulk-bar, the son of Constantine.

The five trusty companions hid themselves in lurking-places, and waited to see what would befall.

By this time the sword was polished, and Kai handed it back to the giant. 'Art thou contented?' said he.

'I am content,' said the giant.

Quoth Kai, 'The sword was rusty because the scabbard was old and worn. Give the sheath to me, and I will put wooden sides into it, new and dry. The steel will not tarnish again.'

They brought him the sheath, and he mended it. Then, with the sword in one hand and the scabbard in the other, he stepped to the giant's chair of state. He made a feint of sheathing the blade, but the sword never reached

the scabbard. It fell on the neck of Garnard the Giant, and smote off his head at one blow.

Yells of rage broke out in the hall, and the knights rushed forth from their hiding-places. They slew the dark followers of the giant, and plundered his castle of jewels and gold. Then Kai and Bedivere and the rest journeyed to Arthur's Court.

A year and a day had passed and gone from the time when they set out, till the time when they returned, and bore into the Wide White Hall of Arthur the mighty sword of Garnard the Giant.

They told King Arthur how they had sped, and everything that had happened. Then said the King, 'Which of these wonders shall we seek first?' And they answered, 'Let us seek for Mabon, the son of Modron. Perchance it is not well with him where he is. But we shall never find him unless we first find his cousin Idwel.'

HOW THEY FOUND MABON'S COUSIN

THEN Arthur arose, and with him all the warriors of the Island of the Mighty, and they went forth to seek Idwel, Mabon's cousin. They journeyed on until they reached Castle Doleful, where the Meagre Knight had his dwelling. And lo, the Meagre Knight himself stood on the topmost tower, and cried, 'Arthur, what is it thou dost want with me? I have nothing in this castle to gladden strangers with. I have neither wheat to make bread for my guests, nor oats

to fodder their horses. Nothing remains to me within these walls that can give me pleasure or peace. Do not then strive to harm me.'

'I have not come hither to harm thee,' replied Arthur, 'but to seek for a prisoner whom thou hast in hold.'

'I will give him up to thee, King Arthur,' answered the Meagre Knight, 'though I thought to hold him against all the world. To thee will I yield my prisoner, and with him my allegiance. Thou shalt have henceforth my advice in council and my help in war.'

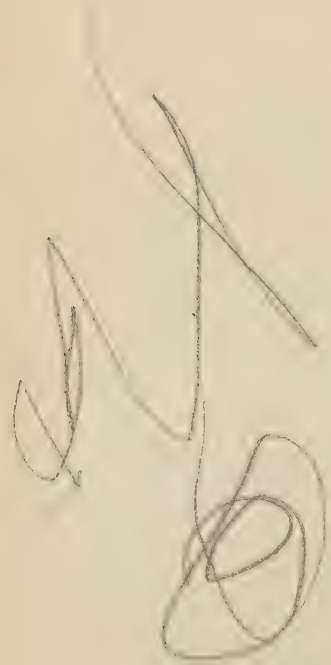
So he brought forth Idwel, the cousin of Mabon, from the cell where he held him captive; and the Meagre Knight did homage to King Arthur.

HOW ARTHUR'S NOBLES BEGGED HIM TO RETURN FROM THAT QUEST.

THEN his nobles entreated Arthur saying, 'Sir King, do thou go home; it is not fitting that thou shouldst journey with thy Host to achieve such quests as this.'

'If that be indeed your counsel,' answered the King, 'I will return. But before I go I will choose those knights whom I deem worthy to finish the adventure in my stead. Uriel, thou must needst go, for thou canst understand the speech of all the

creatures in the world, even to the tongues of beasts and birds. And thou, Idwel, it is fitting for thee to seek thy kinsman along with my paladins. And Kai and Bedivere, go ye also; for I know that ye will not turn back from any adventure on which ye are bound until it be accomplished. Finish the quest for me.'



HOW THEY SOUGHT FOR MABON, THE SON OF MODRON

SO Kai and Bedivere and Uriel and Idwel took counsel as to how they should seek for Mabon. No one knew what had become of him, nor could any man living remember the time when he was lost. So long ago it was, that the oldest of all the old men had heard nothing of it, nor had their grandfathers, nor their great-grandfathers.

'There are birds and beasts that are older than men,' said Idwel; 'let us seek out the oldest animal in the

world. Uriel can speak for us and ask him whether anything be known of my cousin Mabon.'

Quoth Bedivere, 'There is surely no creature in the world so old as the Ousel of Deepdell; if she cannot help us no one can.'

The four knights journeyed onward with their men till they found the Ousel of Deepdell. She was sitting on a small stone, beneath the shadow of the great trees of the forest where she dwelt. And Uriel adjured her, saying, 'Ousel of Deepdell, we have come to thee on an embassy from Arthur. Tell us if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken, when three nights old, from between his mother and the wall?'

And the Ousel answered, 'When I first came here I was a young bird. I found a smith's anvil at this spot where I am sitting. No one has worked upon it from that day to this, nor has anything been done to

wear it away, except that I have pecked it with my beak every evening when I have been pluming my feathers before going to rest. Now nothing more remains of it than this little stone, which is not larger than a nut. But during all this time I have never heard of the man for whom ye ask. Nevertheless, I will do all that it is fitting I should do for an embassy from Arthur. There is a race of animals that were formed before me, and to them I will guide you.'

So she led them to the spot where the Stag of the Fernbrake lay at the foot of a withered oak.

'Stag of the Fernbrake,' cried Uriel, 'we come to thee on an embassy from Arthur, for we know of no animal older than thou. Say, dost thou know anything of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when three nights old?'

And the Stag answered: 'When I first came hither this country was a

wide plain, and there was a single oak sapling growing here. The sapling in time became an oak with a hundred branches. It stood a long while in its prime; but at length it perished, so that nothing now remains of it but this stump, withered and dead. An oak is three hundred years in growing, three hundred years in its prime, and three hundred years in its decay; but in all the time I have been here I never heard of the man for whom ye inquire. Nevertheless, since ye come on an embassy from Arthur, I will be your guide to an animal that was formed before me.'

So they went on, and came to the place where dwelt the Owl of Dark-dingle. And Uriel said, 'Owl of Dark-dingle, here is an embassy from Arthur. Knowest thou aught of Mabon, the son of Mǫdron, who was taken from his mother when three nights old?'

'If I knew I would tell you. When I first came hither this wide valley ye

THE STAG OF THE FERNBRAKE LEADS ARTHUR'S EMBASSY TO THE OWL OF DARKDINGLE.

behold was a wooded glen. And there came a race of men who uprooted all the trees. But a second wood sprang up; and the one ye see around you is the third that has grown here. Yet in all that time I never heard of the man for whom ye ask until this day. Nevertheless, I will be the guide of Arthur's embassy to the oldest animal in the world, and the one that has travelled farthest—the Eagle of the Aldergrove.'

So they journeyed to the aldergrove where the Eagle was spending peaceful days in his old age. And Uriel said, 'Eagle of the Aldergrove, we, an embassy from Arthur, have come to ask thee if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when three nights old?'

And the Eagle answered: 'Long have I been here. And when I first came hither there was a rock in this place so high that from the top of it I pecked

at the stars every evening. Now it is less than a span in height. From that day to this I have been here, and never heard of the man for whom ye ask, except once when I went in search of prey as far as the Lone Lake. There I struck my claws into a salmon, thinking he would serve me for food for a long time; but he drew me out into deep water, and I had hard work to escape from him. Then I called together all my kindred, and we went to do battle with him and slay him. But he sent ambassadors to make peace with me, and came and entreated me to take fifty fish-spears out of his back. He may know something of the man of whom ye speak, and if he does not, I know of no one who does. However, I will be your guide to him.'

So the Eagle led the embassy to the margin of the broad, blue, shining lake, and called up the Salmon from its depths. 'Salmon of Lone Lake,' he cried, 'I have come to thee with an

embassy from Arthur to ask if thou knowest aught of Mabon, the son of Modron, who was taken from his mother when three nights old?'

'All that I know I will tell you,' said the Salmon. 'With every tide I go up the River Severn till I come under the walls of Gloucester Castle, and there I have found such wrong as I never found elsewhere. And that ye may believe me, let two of you go thither upon my two shoulders.'

Then the paladins consulted together, and it was determined that Kai and Uriel should go up the River Severn with the Salmon of Lone Lake.

HOW THEY FOUND MABON, THE SON OF MODRON

SO Kai and Uriel stood upon the shoulders of the Salmon of Lone Lake, and he swam with them up the River Severn till they came under the walls of Gloucester Castle. As they drew near they heard a voice wailing so bitterly in the dungeon that it made their hearts ache for very pity. Cried Uriel, 'Who is it that sorrows thus within this rocky chamber?'

'Alas!' answered the voice, 'to be here is cause enough for grief; and I have woe on woe. I am Mabon, the

son of Modron, and I am held captive in this cell. I, the Elfin Huntsman, eternally young, am shut in from the hills and the woods and the quick-pulsed joy of the chase. No imprisonment was ever so hard as mine; not even the captivity of King Lear, nor the durance of Spuramain, Ardent in the Chase, who was shut up in the prison of Gwyn, the son of Nith, King of Faerie.'

'Dost thou hope for release,' asked Uriel, 'through payment of silver or gold? Could gifts of treasure buy freedom for thee? Or canst thou only be set free by means of battle and strife.'

'If I am ever freed from this cruel imprisonment, it can only happen to me through battle and strife,' he said.

Then the Salmon bore Kai and Uriel back to their companions.

HOW THEY SET MABON, THE SON OF MODRON, FREE

WHEN they returned to Arthur, and told him where Mabon, the son of Modron, was held in durance, Arthur summoned all the warriors of the Island, and they set out for Gloucester, where Mabon was in prison.

So Kai and Bedivere sailed upon the shoulders of the Salmon of Lone Lake, while Arthur's armies journeyed round by land. And while the King and his knights were fighting against the castle, and the garrison were defending it, Kai broke through the wall,

and carried off the captive on his back.

Then Arthur returned home, and with him Mabon, the son of Modron, at liberty.

HOW THE FLAX SEED WAS OBTAINED FOR OLWEN'S VEIL

IT chanced one day that Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn was walking over a mountain. And lo! he seemed to hear in the wind a little sorrowful cry. He looked hither and thither, up and down, but neither beast nor bird could he see. At last he found that the wailing came from an ant-hill at his feet.

The ants redoubled their outcries, for they were in fear of their lives. Never were ants in greater danger of being burnt to death. The heath on

the mountains had been set ablaze that morn, and the fire was smouldering still along the ground, and coming nearer to them every moment.

Prince Gwythir drew his sword, and, with a single stroke, he cut the ant-hill off the hillside, and tossed it to a place of safety.

'Receive our blessing,' cried the grateful ants. 'What shall we do for thee, Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn, in return for saving our lives?'

'Know ye that Prince Kilhugh seeks Olwen, the daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, to be his bride?'

'We know it,' said they; 'but what is that to thee?'

'Is not Kilhugh also a Companion of Arthur?' returned the Prince. 'Now Thornogre Thistlehair requires that he shall bring him the nine bushels of flax seed that are sown in his field to make the wedding veil for Olwen

of the White Footprints. If one grain be missing he will forbid the marriage. But, knights of Arthur though we be, there is no warrior among us all who is able to find those seeds again. Therefore, little ants, if ye would indeed do me a pleasure, gather them up for me.'

'That which no man could give thee we will give,' exclaimed the ants, and hastened forth to the field of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants.

Towards evening they returned, each with a grain of the flax seed in its mouth. Prince Gwythir set a bushel on the ground for them. Up its sides they climbed, and over the brim they dropped the seeds down into it, one by one. Nine times they filled the bushel, till of the full measure only one seed was wanting. 'All in good time,' cried the ants; 'the lame emmet has not yet come home.' And the

lame emmet brought in the last grain by nightfall.

Then Prince Gwythir hastened to Arthur's Hall, and gave the nine bushels of flax seed to Prince Kilhugh.

HOW ARTHUR OBTAINED THE CAULDRON OF CRUSEWARD, STEWARD OF ODGAR, KING OF IRELAND.

THEN said Arthur, 'Which of these marvels shall we now seek first?'

And the heroes answered, 'Let us seek the Cauldron of Cruseward, Steward of Odgar, King of Ireland.'

So Arthur sent an embassy to Odgar, King of Ireland, to ask that he would send him the Cauldron of Cruseward, the Comptroller of his household.

Forthwith Odgar gave orders that the cauldron should be sent to King Arthur. But Cruseward answered wrathfully, 'Bear witness to my words all ye who hear! If the sight of my cauldron would bring to Arthur every blessing that his heart could desire, I would not let him catch a glimpse of it; much less, O King, will I bestow it on him.'

Arthur's embassy was forced to return with this refusal. Then the King rose up, indignant. He chose a company of warriors and embarked in his ship Prydwen, the steed of battle, and passed over-sea to Ireland. As soon as they landed they marched to the dwelling of Cruseward.

But Odgar's army marked the strength of Arthur's Host, and counselled their King to make peace with him rather than abide the chance of war. Wherefore King Odgar sent to ask Arthur to come to his palace. In his high hall, he received him courte-

ously, and entertained his warriors, feasting them with abundance of meat and wine, and songs and music.

When the banquet was over, and Odgar prepared to give presents to his guests, Arthur asked again that the cauldron might be bestowed upon him. But the Cruseward of Ireland spoke out boldly, saying, 'Nay, King Arthur, that may not be. I will not give it at the request of any man. If I would have given it for the asking, it should have been sent to thee at the word of my master Odgar, King of Ireland.'

But the bold Bedivere could not endure to hear this insolent denial made to Arthur. He sprang up, seized the cauldron, and set it on the back of Perifer, King Arthur's Cauldron-bearer, whose duty it was to carry the King's cauldron and light the fire under it. Then the Pict from beyond the Headland of Ganion seized Excalibur and brandished him. And

Arthur's Host arose and slew Cruseward the Irishman and all his men.

When the Irish came to avenge them, the Knights of the Island of the Mighty chased them headlong from the field. And they carried off the cauldron, full of Irish gold, and embarked in Prydwen, Arthur's ship, and landed near St. David's Head.

If any one desires to know how much the cauldron would contain, he may learn it at the Pool of the Cauldron, near Fishguard, in Pembrokeshire, for there is the measure of the cauldron.

HOW ARTHUR OBTAINED THE CHARMED BALSAM FROM THE SORCERESS.

THEN said Arthur, 'Which of these wonders shall we seek next?'

And his paladins answered: 'Let us seek for the Charmed Balsam that is guarded by the Jet-black Sorceress, daughter of the Snow-white Sorceress, at the Source of the Brook of Sorrow, on the confines of the Twilight Land.'

So Arthur journeyed northwards to the mouth of the cavern where the Jet-black Sorceress dwelt. And Gwyn,

the son of Nith, came up from the Twilight Land to help him to fight the Sorceress, for 'legions fell beneath his conquering arm, swifter than broken rushes to the ground.'

When Arthur was about to assail the Sorceress in her stronghold, Gwyn, the son of Nith, and Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn, advised him rather to send his two attendants, Perifer, the Cauldron-bearer, and Pedifer, the Foot-holder, to fight with her.

As the two brothers entered the cave, she seized one of them by the hair, and threw him on the ground under her feet. But the other caught her by the hair, flung her down, and dragged her away from his brother. Yet she turned on them again and again, and in the end she drove them forth with kicks and blows.

Arthur was angry at seeing his servants so ill-used. He would have gone into the cave, had not Gwyn, the son of Nith, and Prince Gwythir

from the Land of the Dawn, dissuaded him, saying, 'It would not be becoming for thee, O King, to be seen quarrelling with an old hag. Let the Two Tall Brothers go now.' So they went.

But if the first two warriors suffered at the hands of the Sorceress, these two suffered far more. They were so sorely battered and wounded that they had not strength to move, and would never have left that place alive had not their companions lifted them at last upon Curvetter, Arthur's mare.

Then no one could restrain King Arthur in his ire. He rushed forward to the mouth of the cavern, and dealt the Sorceress so mighty a blow with Gleaming-glaive, his dagger, that she sank down slain on the floor of the den.

And Kai carried off the charmed balsam.

HOW ODGAR, KING OF IRELAND, WENT WITH ARTHUR TO HUNT THE BOARHEADED BRANCHBREAKER, AND CARRIED OFF THE TUSK.

AFTER this, Arthur went into Armorica, and with him Mabon, the son of Modron, and the Golden-haired Pryderi. They went to seek Race-apace and Boundoft, the dogs of Bay-bold, that were as swift as the wind, and were never let loose on any beast which they did not bring down. When he had found them, Arthur passed

over into Ireland; and Odgar, King of Ireland, joined his Host, for he alone could pluck the tusk out of the living head of the Branchbreaker. Together they journeyed into the West to seek the Manhound of Erin. And after adventures many and marvellous, they found him.

Now, all was ready for the hunting of the Boarheaded Branchbreaker, and the huntsmen came to the meet. Mabon, the son of Modron, led Raceapace and Boundoft in a leash in one hand, and in the other Tracktrail, the Hound of Spuramain, Ardent in the Chase. King Arthur led his own dog Cavall. So they sounded the bugle, uncoupled the dogs, and set off after the boar.

In the course of the hunt Cavall brought the boar to bay, and he turned on his pursuers. Then Kai of North Britain was the first man to attack him. He was mounted upon Arthur's mare, Curvetter, and had a

great axe in his hand. After a long conflict Cavall brought down the Branchbreaker, and Odgar, King of Ireland, plucked out his tusk. Yet so furious was the raging of the boar, that he was not able to carry it away. But Kai, with dauntless courage, rode close up to the infuriated beast, with one stroke clove his head in twain, and bore off the tusk.

Now it was not the dogs mentioned by Thornogre Thistlehair that brought down Boar Branchbreaker, but Arthur's own dog Cavall.

HOW ARTHUR OBTAINED WHITE WRAITH, GWETHO'S STEED, AND THE LEASH OF EWEN OF THE FENLAND; AND HOW HE SOUGHT AND FOUND KENNEDER THE WILD.

THEN said Arthur, 'Which of these wondrous things shall we seek next?'

And his Chieftains answered, 'It were best for us to seek White Wraith, Gwetho's steed.'

Now some time before this, Cordelia, the daughter of King Lear, had been

betrothed to Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn. But on the morning of the wedding, Gwyn, the son of Nith, King of Faerie, came up from the Twilight Land and carried her away.

Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn gathered his hosts together to do battle with Gwyn, the son of Nith. But Gwyn overcame him and took him prisoner. With him he captured Ungust and his son, and Spuramain, Ardent in the Chase, and Nascien, with Kenneder the Wild his son, and three others.

Gwyn and his men slew Nascien, and forced Kenneder his son to pull his heart out. On account of this Kenneder went mad, and became wilder than the wildest creature on the mountains.

But when Arthur heard of it he was wroth. He led his Host into the North Country, and summoned Gwyn, the son of Nith, before him, to answer

for his evil deeds and for the cruelty done to the son of Nascien. King Arthur compelled him to set the captive warriors free, and made a treaty of peace between Gwyn, the son of Nith, and Prince Gwythir.

These were the terms of the treaty: that Gwyn and Gwythir should fight for Cordelia every first of May, until one of them overthrew the other. The victor should have her for his bride; but till one was victorious in the strife it was decreed that the lady should remain under the roof of her father, King Lear. This is why Gwyn, the son of Nith, King of Faerie, and Prince Gwythir from the Land of the Dawn, fight for the fair Cordelia every May-day morning until the knell of doom.

When Arthur had thus made peace between the chieftains, they gave him White Wraith, Gwetho's steed, and the leash of Ewen of the Fenland.

Arthur thence passed on into the North, and caught Kenneder the Wild,

who was nine times wilder than the wildest creature on the mountains. He was the only huntsman in the world who could hold in the two cubs of the Werewolf.

HOW THEY OBTAINED THE BEARD OF DISSUL LONG-BEARD.

KAI and Bedivere were sitting one day on the top of Plinlimmon, in the highest wind that ever blew. They looked round upon the country far and wide, and beheld a great column of smoke rising up from the land towards the south. The blast carried away no blue reek from it, nor did it bend or waver in the storm. It rose steadily upwards to the sky, as though the breeze disdained to scatter it.

Quoth Kai, 'That smoke is rising from the fire of a robber.'

They set off down the mountain-side, and hastened to the spot whence it came. As they drew near they saw that it was Dissul Longbeard who had lit the fire, and he was roasting a wild boar before it.

'Behold!' said Bedivere to Kai, 'that fellow is the worst thief that ever fled from Arthur. Dost thou not know who he is?'

'I do,' said Kai; 'he is Dissul Longbeard. I know, too, that no leash can be found strong enough to hold the two cubs of the Werewolf unless one be made of the beard of that very man. Even then the leash will be brittle unless his beard be plucked out with wooden tweezers while he is alive.'

'What is thy counsel in this matter?' said Bedivere. 'He thinks as much of his beard as any Briton of us all; it will be no easy matter to deprive him of it.'

'Let him eat as much of the boar's meat as he likes,' said Kai; 'then he will go to sleep.'

Now Dissul Longbeard was a giant-robber, and he could eat nine times as much as any ordinary man. So Kai and Bedivere spent the time while he was eating, in making the wooden tweezers. When he had had enough, he lay down to rest. Kai crept softly to him, and finding him sound asleep, the chieftains began digging a hole at his feet. To make it deep enough to contain him, they had to dig the largest hole that ever was dug in the world. When it was ready they heaved him up, flung him in, and squeezed him fiercely down in the pit. Then they plucked out his beard with their wooden tweezers, and ended by killing him outright.

Thereupon they set out for Camelot, and gave the leash which they had made of the beard of Dissul into the hand of Arthur. The King gazed upon

it thoughtfully. Then he sang a little song about it:

'Kai, thou hast made a mighty braid,
A leash of the beard of Dissul, the feared;
Alive were he, thy death 'twould be!'

But Kai was angry; and many a year passed by before the warriors of this Island could make peace between him and the King. From that day forth he would never come to Arthur's aid. When the King's troubles fell upon him, and the Companions of the Table Round were slain, Kai left him to bear it all, alone.

HOW ARTHUR OBTAINED THE TWO CUBS OF THE WEREWOLF.

SAID Arthur, 'Which of these wonders shall we seek now?'

And his heroes answered, 'Let us seek for the two cubs of the Werewolf. The leash has been obtained that can restrain them, and Kenneder the Wild is here to hold them in.'

'Does any one know where the Werewolf may be found?' asked the King.

'She has been seen near Milford Haven,' said one.

So Arthur and his men repaired thither, and he asked at the house of Tringad the Warrior for tidings of her.

'In what form does she appear?' asked Tringad.

'Once she was a fair lady,' said the King, 'but she has been changed into a werewolf; and there are two cubs along with her.'

'I have hard work to defend my flock from her, then,' said Tringad, 'and in spite of all my care she has many a time carried off sheep and lambs from my fold. At present she is down in the cave at Milford Haven.'

Hearing this, Arthur went on board Prydwen, his ship; and his warriors marched to the hunt by land. They surrounded and captured the Werewolf and her cubs; and for Arthur's sake they were changed back into their proper shapes.

Then Arthur's Host went hither and thither throughout the land, by two and two.

HOW ARTHUR SENT TO SEEK FOR THE JEWELLED RAZOR AND SCISSORS AND COMB THAT WERE BETWEEN THE TWO EARS OF BURSTING-BOAR THE WIDEWASTER.

WHEN the cubs were taken, Arthur and his Host returned to Camelot. And the King asked, 'Is there any wondrous thing not yet obtained?'

And they answered, 'The jewelled razor and scissors and comb that are between the two ears of Burstingboar the Widewaster.'

So Arthur took counsel with his paladins, and they advised that Merlin should be sent to Ireland to find out whether the treasures really were between the ears of Burstingboar, for if they were not, it would be sheer folly and madness to encounter him.

There was no man who did not know where Burstingboar was to be found. He had devastated the third part of Ireland, and no one could tell what country he would ravage next.

Merlin set off to seek him. He found that he was still in Ireland, and tracked him to his lair at Cold Blast Ridge in Leinster.

Then Merlin changed himself into a bird, and lighted on a bramble near the lair. There lay Burstingboar in his strength, with his seven young boars around him. And Merlin saw that the jewels were between his ears. He thought it great pity that brave men should lose their lives for them, if he could take them by stealth. So

he darted down upon the head of Burstingboar and tried to snatch one of them away; but he only carried off a great bristle in his beak.

Burstingboar rose up, foaming with wrath, and shook himself; and a fleck of the poisonous foam fell upon Merlin. He was never well in health from that day.

HOW ARTHUR CAME TO IRELAND, AND HOW THE SAINTS INTERCEDED WITH HIM FOR THE PEOPLE.

WHEN Merlin returned to Camelot and told Arthur, he assembled all the warriors of the Three Islands of Britain, and of the three neighbouring islands, Orkney, and Wight, and Man. And also all the bravest knights of France, Normandy, and Armorica, and all the nobles of the Summer Country. Brave soldiers were they on foot, and valiant warriors on horseback.

With this vast host he went to Ireland. Great was the terror of the people when they saw that Arthur was come and so mighty an army with him! They feared that he came to conquer the country; and not a single king, not even Odgar himself, approached his camp to bid King Arthur welcome. Neither did any of the Irish folk bring food for his men.

But the Saints of Ireland assembled, and came to Arthur, to entreat that he would spare the people, and not bring upon the Island all the woes of war. And Arthur answered: 'Holy Saints, I have not come to make war upon the men of Ireland, but to fight Bursting-boar the Widewaster, who has ravaged a third part of your land.' The Saints then sued for his protection, and he granted it; and they bestowed their blessing on the King.

So the Saints went forth, and told the men of Ireland that Arthur had

come to fight with Burstingboar the Widewaster.

And they were content when they knew that he was come to rid the world of that plague. Being no longer in fear of the Host, they welcomed them, and brought them food, and helped them on their way to the lair of the boar.

HOW THE MEN OF IRELAND, AND ARTHUR'S HOUSEHOLD, AND ARTHUR HIMSELF, FOUGHT THE BOAR IN VAIN.

THUS did Arthur and his Host come to the lair of Burstingboar the Widewaster, on Cold Blast Ridge in Leinster. There Arthur and his chieftains took counsel with the Men of Ireland how best to fight against him. And it was determined that the Irish Host should encounter him on the first day. If he should not be slain, Arthur's

Household should attack him on the second day. If they failed to achieve the adventure, Arthur should hunt him on the third day.

The dogs were let loose upon Burstingboar from all directions the first morning. But though the Men of Ireland fought with him all day long, by evening he had ravaged a fifth part of the Island.

The second day, Arthur's Household fought with all their might from sunrise till sunset; but by nightfall, they were compelled to own that he had worsted them.

The third day Arthur encountered him. Long, indeed, was that combat! The King fought on for nine days and nine nights without stopping, and still the boar was not slain, nor was there so much as one of his young ones wounded in the fray.

HOW ARTHUR EXPLAINED TO HIS WARRIORS WHO BURSTINGBOAR WAS, AND HOW HE SENT URIEL TO CONFER WITH HIM.

ARTHUR'S warriors were amazed at the strength and cunning of Burstingboar the Widewaster. So they asked the King to tell them who he was and whence he came. 'He was once a king,' replied Arthur; 'but he has been changed into a boar because of his sins, and his pride.'

Arthur determined to send Uriel,

who knew all tongues, to speak with the boar. He alone could ask him to come to confer with the King and his nobles and the Men of Ireland.

Uriel climbed up the hill behind the wild boar's lair, and beheld him lying among his young ones, and the jewels glistening between his ears.

He approached cautiously till he was within hearing. Then he called to the wild boar, saying, 'O Prince in wild boar's shape, I entreat of thee, if thou canst speak, to come and confer with Arthur.'

Burstingboar paid no heed to him; but the eldest of his brood, Silverbristles the Heathburrower, made answer in his stead. Now this young boar was a marvellously beauteous beast, for his bristles shone like silver threads. Wherever he went by wood or brake he could be tracked by the shining of his coat. And thus he answered Uriel, who knew all tongues:

'O knight of Arthur's Hall, have we

not suffering enough to bear, seeing that we must spend our lives in this vile shape, without your coming hither to harry us? Give heed to our answer, once for all: we will not confer with Arthur.'

'But hear me; ye mistake the King's intent in coming to this land,' said Uriel. 'He has not come to harry you. He would but have the razor and scissors and comb that are between the two ears of the son of Prince Tared. If he will give them up Arthur will leave you in peace.'

'The son of Prince Tared will never part with those jewels but with his life,' said Silverbristles. 'Moreover, mark my words. To-morrow at dawn we will leave this land, and into Arthur's realms we will go, and there we will do all the hurt and mischief that we may.'

HOW BURSTINGBOAR CAME INTO BRITAIN, AND ARTHUR HUNTED HIM FOR THE SECOND TIME.

URIEL hastened back to the camp to warn King Arthur of the woe that Burstingboar and his brood were minded to work in the Island of the Mighty.

Thereupon the Host resolved that they should never reach that land, and rose with the dawn to be beforehand with them. But lo, the lair was empty; and far out to sea they could descry the wild boars swimming away

to the Island of Britain. As fast as might be, Arthur and his army and his horses and his hounds embarked in Prydwen, Arthur's ship. They set every sail to the wind, and plied their oars with might and main; yet the boars came ashore at the mouth of the River Alun, in Pembrokeshire, a whole day before the Host. They had gone on to St. David's Head, and destroyed every living thing, men and cattle and game, at Milford Haven, before the King landed.

The folk who dwelt in the neighbouring hundreds were filled with terror and dismay. Eagerly did all men look for the return of Arthur. They set watchers on every headland, and beacon fires ready to blaze when the first white sail should appear; and they bade the watchmen tell Arthur where the boars had gone, lest there should be delay in the pursuit. All that night they waited, wearying for Arthur's coming. But in the mornin

their eyes were gladdened by the sight of the ships nearing the shore, Prydwen leading the way.

Forthwith some of them hurried off to carry the good news that the fleet had returned. Others hastened down to the beach to meet the King, and tell him that the monsters had passed that way. The warriors came ashore as quickly as might be, and they pursued the boars with all speed. They came upon them as they were destroying all the flocks and herds at Canaston.

But when the wild boars heard the tramping of Arthur's Host drawing nigh, they left off wasting that countryside, and went up to the Preselly Mountains, in Pembrokeshire. Nobody could tell where they would make their lair. King Arthur had no mind that they should live in peace in his realm and come forth to ravage the fields of his people at will. So he followed them, and sent out huntsmen

to trace them to their hiding-place. And that they might have no chance of escape the hunters set out by three different ways. Arthur's Two Chief Huntsmen went in one direction, and took with them Tracktrail, the Hound of Spuramain, Ardent in the Chase. Kineherd, the son of Kaw, went another way with Race-apace and Boundoft. And Bedivere went round by a third path, and with him Arthur's own dog Cavall. Meantime all the heroes put themselves in ambush among the rocks and bushes by the banks of the River Nevern. Thither came also the Three Bold Brothers, 'whose three shields were three gleaming glitterers, whose three spears were three pointed piercers, whose three swords were three griding gashers.' These men had covered themselves with glory at the hunting of the Boarheaded Branchbreaker, and now they came to join in the chase of Burstingboar the Widewaster. So the Three Bold Brothers wound the horn,

and all the huntsmen together set up such a shout that it seemed as if the sky was falling ; and the hunt began.

But they had to follow the boar to the Tarn of the Nevern, and thence to the Dingle near Preselly Top, before he made a stand. There four of Arthur's Companions met their death in conflict with him : Kineherd, the son of Kaw, and Madoc of Clewyd and Allington, and two more. Before they left the Dingle he turned at bay a second time, and in the fight seven of Arthur's Companions were slain : Hartsbane, the Chief Huntsman of Ireland, and Gwen, the grandson of Kai, Arthur's foster-brother, and five others ; and there he got a wound himself at last.

At the dawn of the morrow, before the day broke, some of the hunters came upon him unawares. But he rose up and slew two of Arthur's gatekeepers, beside Rumbleroll, who used to go on his head to save his feet.

HOW ARTHUR ASKED GWYN, THE SON OF NITH, FOR TIDINGS OF THE BOAR.

THE huntsmen marvelled greatly at the vanishing of Burstingboar.

But Arthur bethought himself of calling Gwyn, the son of Nith, up from the Twilight Land, where he was keeping guard over the sprites of eld, lest they should harm the present race. Perchance, he might know whither the boar had gone.

Gwyn, the son of Nith, heard the behest of Arthur and obeyed. No sooner had the words left the King's

lips than he stood by him on the sward, with the Hounds of Midnight at his heels, and his train of huntsmen trooping along the hilltops.

'Knowest thou aught of Bursting-boar the Widewaster?' said the King.

But Gwyn, the son of Nith, made answer that he knew nothing whatever concerning him; and went his way.

HOW ARTHUR HUNTED THE BOAR THE THIRD TIME, AND HOW ALL BUT ONE OF THE YOUNG BOARS WERE SLAIN.

AT length tidings came that Burstingboar the Widewaster was ravaging the valley of the Loughor, on the boundaries between the shires of Caermarthen and Glamorgan.

The hunt set off once more to drive him away. They encountered him in the vale, and the monster was sore pressed; but Silverbristles and Dare-

dart turned on their pursuers, and killed so many dogs and men that only one man of those who attacked them escaped with his life. Thereupon Arthur and his warriors determined to destroy the whole brood of Burstingboar. So they sent hunters to lie in wait, and bade them bring back word if at any time the Widewaster was abroad without the young boars. Thus they caught them in their lair when he was absent, and set all the dogs on them together.

Burstingboar the Widewaster heard the barking and the shouts, and ran to help them to beat off the hounds. Now Arthur had never seen Burstingboar since he had come to Britain, until then. When the monster saw the King himself leading the huntsmen to the attack and setting the hounds upon him, he made off, and took refuge in the Black Mountain between Brecon and Caermarthen. After him went the hunt with all speed

up to the Black Mountain; and there they killed Scatterdew, one of the boars, at last. The warriors took heart at this, and falling upon the monsters with desperate valour, they slew another, Boar Munchmast by name, and then another, called Boar Bendbracken.

Burstingboar had now no mind to remain longer on the mountain. He began to make his way down again, fighting for every yard of ground he gained, and reached the valley of the River Amman. There, at the ford, Boar Pattergay and Boar Grubgorse were slain. Of all the brood of Burstingboar only Silverbristles the Heathburrower and Daredart the Moortrampler departed from that place alive.

But up and on went the Widewaster, over the hills, till Arthur brought him to bay again. He fought the dogs and men and scattered them, and slew the father of Goronwy, one

of the Three First Knights of Arthur's Court. The streamlet that flows by the spot where he died is called by his name to this day. Many were the hunters and hounds that lost their lives in that fight.

In the end the Boar got off and made his way to the banks of the River Tawy. At this place Silver-bristles parted from Burstingboar and escaped to the stronghold on the banks of the River Tywi. And whether he died of a wound, or went to Gwyn, the son of Nith, in Twilight Land, or what became of him, the story does not say; but certain it is that never again did he waste the fair valleys of the Island of the Mighty.

Daredart, however, stayed with the Widewaster, and they dashed onwards into Cardiganshire. After them galloped Arthur's Two Chief Huntsmen, till they overtook them and forced them to make a stand at the Ford of the River Teify. There Burstingboar

vanished again, no man knew how or whither. But Daredart the Moor-trampler was surrounded, and many a brave warrior did he slay before he broke through the ring of huntsmen and escaped. Up to the Brecon Mountains he rushed, on and on; till the men of Armorica stopped his headlong race, and he turned at bay. In that onset he killed the King of Armorica and two of Arthur's uncles before they could bring him down. But he was slain at last.

Then Arthur's Host returned to Cornwall, for no one knew where Burstingboar could be.

HOW ARTHUR WARNED THE MEN OF CORNWALL OF THE COMING OF THE WIDE-WASTER.

ARTHUR'S Host passed into Cornwall none too soon. Hardly had the King returned to his palace, when a messenger ran panting into the Hall with tidings of Bursting-boar.

'O King,' he cried, 'arise! This is no time for thee to take thine ease, when the Boar is laying waste thy dominions! He is trampling down

the towers and towns, uprooting the trees, and slaying the men in all the country on the borders of Brecknock and Hereford. And he is coming southwards over the mountains, to do the like in Cornwall.'

The King's eyes flashed. 'Which way is he coming?' said he.

'He will take the water below Chepstow where the Wye falls into the Severn,' replied the man.

Then Arthur sent forth heralds to summon all the brave nobles and fighting men of Cornwall to meet him on the shores of the estuary of the Severn, that he might warn them of the coming of the monster. And thus he spoke to them, 'Men of the Island of the Mighty! — Burstingboar the Widewaster has slain many of my Companions and my huntsmen; but, by the courage of a warrior, he shall not come into Cornwall while I am alive to hinder him. I will follow him no more in the chase, but I will

go forth to meet him, and face to face will I encounter and slay him, or lose my life in the doing of it. As for you, do as ye think best for yourselves.'

HOW THEY OBTAINED TWO OF THE TREASURES THAT WERE BETWEEN THE EARS OF BURSTINGBOAR THE WIDEWASTER.

AFTER that, Arthur sent a body of knights to Chepstow, with the best hounds of the Island of Britain, to keep watch over the movements of the Boar. Other bodies of picked men were posted along the shores of the Severn on the Gloucester side, to drive him back into the water if he should try to land.

MABON AND KENNEDER SNATCH THE RAZOR AND SCISSORS FROM BURSTINGBOAR.

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The warriors had hardly taken their stand before Burstingboar appeared, making straight for the river and the lands of the south. As soon as Mabon, the son of Modron, caught sight of him, he sprang upon the back of White Wraith, the steed of Gwetho, swift as the waves, and came up with the Boar just as he reached the Severn. Hardly a minute later, Baulkbar, the son of Constantine, came up also; and immediately afterwards Merlin himself, and then Arthur and all his Companions. How they did it, no man could ever tell, but the end of it was that they caught Burstingboar by his four feet, and flung him into the Severn. As he was falling into the river, Mabon, the son of Modron, put spurs to [illegible] and bounding forward, snatched the razor from behind one of his ears. Kenneder the Wild also spurred his horse on the other side, and caught away the scissors from behind the other ear.

But before any one could seize the comb, the Widewaster disappeared beneath the bubbling water.

HOW TWO OF ARTHUR'S COMPANIONS WERE NEARLY DROWNED IN CHASING THE BOAR; AND HOW THEY OBTAINED THE COMB AT LAST.

IF the warriors thought they had freed the land from the monster, they were grievously mistaken. He felt the bottom under his feet, and set off swimming towards the coast of Cornwall. Nor could hound or hunter overtake him. He came ashore without let or hindrance, in spite of them all.

Bent on reaching Cornwall before him, Osla with the Great Dagger, and Pedifer, the Foot-holder, dashed into the water after him. But they could not follow; and in good sooth, great as was the trouble the warriors had in getting the comb, it was a small matter compared with saving those two men from drowning. Osla with the Great Dagger, as he ran after the Boar, had dropped Bridgeblade from his sheath and lost him. The empty scabbard filled with water and drew the chieftain under. Never was drowning man so hard to help! As for Pedifer, he was so heavy that it seemed as if two millstones were dragging him down beneath the flood.

But Arthur and his Host were gone after the Boar; and at length they came up with him in Cornwall. All that they had done before seemed child's play in comparison with the toils and dangers they encountered in

getting the comb. But they drove Burstingboar to cover and brought him to bay, and took the comb at last.

HOW BURSTINGBOAR VANISHED FOR THE THIRD TIME.

BURSTINGBOAR was worsted indeed, but that land could have no rest till he was slain. Only by making him fight for his life day by day, could the knights of Arthur keep him from spreading desolation and woe from Land's End to the River Tamar. He was hunted and harried from morning to night, till he was weary of that countryside. There were villages to wreck, crops to ruin, and forests to trample down elsewhere in the

Island of the Mighty. And he turned to go into Devon: but his foes were too quick for him. They encountered him in the valleys and forced him back; they met him on the mountains and drove him down into the dales. Go where he would, the huntsmen barred his way. Baffled on all sides, he turned again and made straight for the sea.

Headlong after him dashed the hunters, urging their fleet steeds to the utmost of their speed. Over moor and moss, through river and rill, they chased the Boar out of Cornwall. The woods and valleys rang with their shouts, the barking of dogs, and the shrilling of the horn.

Down a steep coomb they rushed at last, to the marge of the wide sea; but not even Gwyn, the son of Nith, on the Black Horse of the Seas, nor Mabon, the son of Modron, on the steed of Gwetho, swift as the waves,

could overtake the Widewaster ere he plunged into the tide.

Then, alas, for Race-apace and Boundoft, the hounds of Baybold, swift as the storm wind, that were never let loose on any beast which they did not bring down!—Kenneder the Wild himself could not hold them in when they saw that the Boar was going to escape. They darted like swallows through the surge, and set off swimming after Burstingboar out into the great deep. Mabon, the son of Modron, and Gwyn, the son of Nith, put spurs to their steeds and tried to hinder them, in vain. Baybold, their master, whistled to them and shouted, but they paid no heed. Moote, Prize, and Rechate, skilled in winding the horn, sounded the recall, but the dogs were following the game too eagerly to hear.

Silently the huntsmen reined in their panting horses on the pebbly beach, to watch the monster as he

swam away from the shores of Britain with those two fierce dogs in his wake. They watched them growing less and less in the distance as they swam farther and farther out to sea, until the last faint speck on the horizon faded from their sight.

And from that day to this no one has ever heard of Burstingboar the Widewaster; nor can any one tell what became of Race-apace and Boundoft, the bold hounds that could not be kept back from following him.

Then Arthur and his Companions returned to Camelot, to seek repose after their labours. And the people received them everywhere with songs and rejoicing, because they had rid the Island of the Mighty of that plague.

HOW KILHUGH CLAIMED OLWEN

PRINCE KILHUGH was ready to claim his bride at last. Great was the stir among the people, and mighty the multitude, that came together to escort him into the Land of the Giants. All who wished ill-fortune to Thornogre Thistlehair, and all whom he had misused, followed in the train of the Prince. Long and bitterly had he oppressed them; yet, not a man of them all had such cruel wrongs to avenge as Baulkbar, the son of Constantine. Had not the giant

slain his three-and-twenty brothers? Had he not kept his inheritance from Constantine his father? And this, though the youths were his own kindred and the man he maltreated his brother! Therefore, of all Arthur's Companions, Baulkbar was chosen to go with Kilhugh on this adventure. Kaw of Strathclyde went too, for he alone could shave the Chief of the Giants with the Tusk of the Boar-headed Branchbreaker.

Across the boundless plain they marched, a mighty host to view; and into the hall of the vast castle they bore the wonders.

Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, sat upon his throne. Right dismally he welcomed them; and gloomily he viewed the marvels, as one by one they gave them to him. The sword of Garnard the Giant, the broad keen blade that never would slay Burstingboar, since he had fled from Arthur and his huntsmen; the

flax seed for Olwen's wedding veil; the Basket of Mordrain Tall-Heron, and the Cauldron of Cruseward, Steward of Odgar, King of Ireland, for her wedding feast; the tusk of the Boarheaded Branchbreaker; the Charmed Balsam of the Jet-black Sorceress, in the Flasks of Gwidolwyn the Dwarf; and the Razor, the Scissors, and the Comb, all glittering with gems, from between the two ears of the son of Prince Tared.

Thornogre Thistlehair ordered his pages and attendants to prove each treasure as it was brought to him. So one put a warrior's meal in the Basket of Mordrain Tall-Heron, and food for a hundred heroes he took out; and another tried to cook food for a coward in the Cauldron of Cruseward, but the water would not boil. Another tested the Sword of Garnard, and a fourth measured the flax seed for Olwen's veil in the bushel of Thornogre Thistlehair, but not one seed was missing.

They poured the warm balsam on the hair of the giant and combed it and dressed it ready for the wedding. Then Kaw of North Britain shaved Thornogre Thistlehair with the tusk of the Boarheaded Branchbreaker, and no man was ever so closely shaven as he.

'Art thou shaven, man?' cried Kilhugh.

'I am shaven,' said he.

'Is thy daughter mine now?'

'She is thine,' he replied. 'Yet give me no thanks for that, Prince Kilhugh, for, of mine own free will, I would never have given her to thee. Nor hast thou great reason to thank thyself, Sir Prince, for by thee were none of these wonders done. But give all thy thanks to Arthur and his Companions, who have achieved the quest for thee.'

Then Baulkbar, the son of Constantine, stood forth and cried, 'Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the

Giants—thou hast foully slain my three-and-twenty brothers. Thou hast defrauded my father of his rightful heritage. By my hand shalt thou die this day.'

'If this be Olwen's wedding day, it is the day of my death,' said the giant. 'Art thou he, indeed, who is destined to boast he slew Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants?'

Thereupon Baulkbar seized him by the hair of his head and dragged him up to the battlements of his castle. He slew him there, and cut his head off, and stuck it on a pole upon the topmost tower. And they seized upon his citadel and all his treasures, and gave them to his brother the Herdsman.

Then Olwen was wedded to Kilhugh, and she was his wife as long as she lived. And Arthur's warriors went home, each to his own land.

Thus did Kilhugh, the son of Prince Kilith, win Olwen, the daughter of Thornogre Thistlehair, Chief of the Giants, to be his bride.

THE END

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